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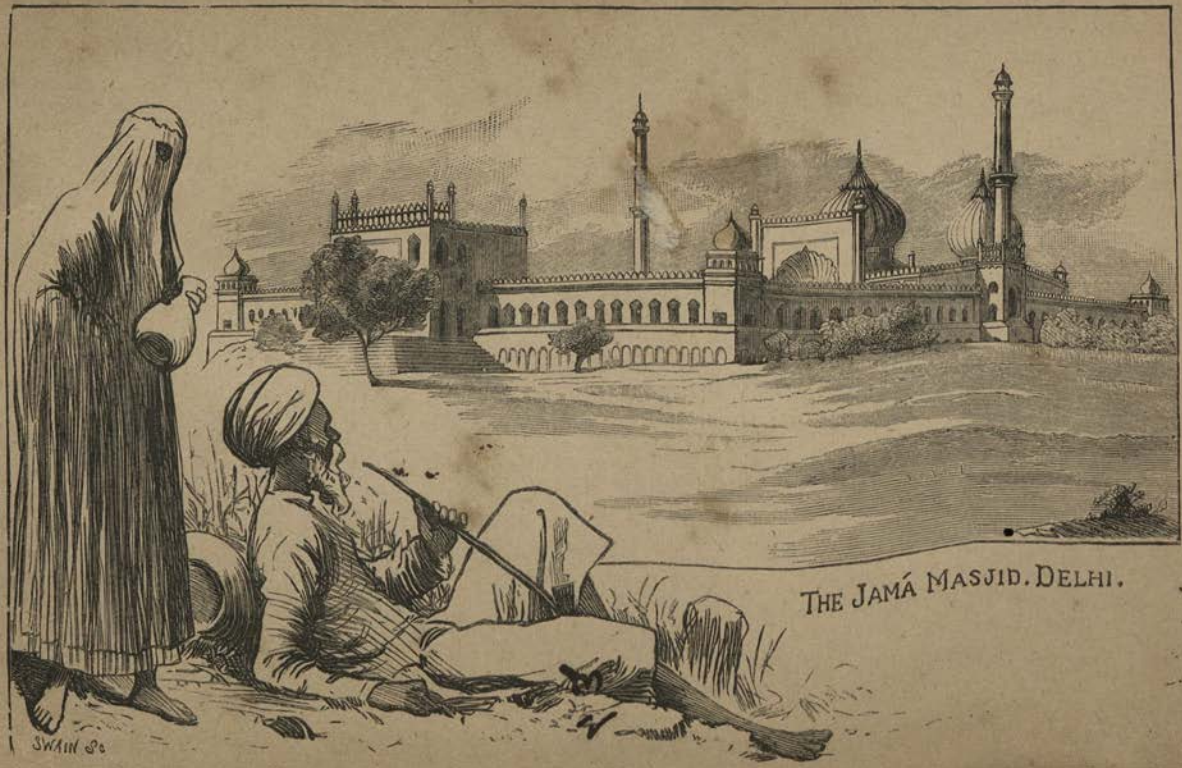

THE JAMÁ MASJID. DELHI.

INDIA:

SKETCHES AND STORIES OF NATIVE LIFE.

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BY THE

REV. J. EWEN

AUTHOR OF 'THE HANDBOOK TO BENARES.'

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PREFACE.

DURING my ten years' residence in India I made it part of my daily business to keep notes of the things I saw and heard. Looking over them, I found I had a mass of material illustrative of native life, which, so far as I know, has not hitherto been touched. It has been drawn upon for this volume. Some of the stories are taken from native books; the rest were told me by members of the different castes; while the majority of the incidents came under my own observation.

My object has been to give the conclusions at which I have arrived regarding the Mahometans and Hindus of the North-West Provinces; and, by means of story and incident, to give the reasons for my opinions. I have no theory to support, none to

controvert. The only merit the stories possess is that they are native, and, I think, published for the first time in English. My only hope is that they may be found entertaining and instructive.

J. E.

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INDIA.

MAHOMETANS.

CHAPTER I.

First Impressions — The Prince and the Jeweller — The possessed Maulvi—Spirit-burial—The Visitation of Spirits—How Spirits are repelled—The Spirits' Holiday—The Evil Eye—The Pedlar's Bad Luck—A terrified Mussulmani—The Breath of the Righteous—Fatalism—Rheumatic Ducks—The 'Providence' of the Poultry-yard—How Fate is decided—The Weaver who thought Gold was in his Fate.

WHERE shall I begin, and how?

This is not a new question with me. I found it among my thoughts on my first journey from Calcutta to Delhi. A more monotonous dreary country I had never traversed, and I was rapidly coming to the conclusion there could be nothing to tell when the minárs of the Jamá Musjid of the latter city, rising, as it seemed, from a barren, dreary plain, began to gather distinctness in the distance, come nearer and nearer, and eventually mingle in a panorama of kiosks, capped by glittering cupolas and guarded by stately minarets. The prospect was bewildering: and the question which originated in my inability to discover anything worthy of record, remained to taunt me with my want of capacity to describe a scene so novel and perplexing.

But I have no intention of undertaking even now a task which then appeared impossible. I am concerned with men and their customs, and in my perplexity shall allow that first glimpse of the ancient capital of India to decide the question for me.

Every object there is Mahometan. The gloomy fort, which, in its massive grandeur and solidity, has withstood the shock of battle, and survived the fall of dynasties, is emblematic, in its proportions, of their prolonged supremacy in arms; the majestic Musjid of their supremacy in religion; while Nádir Sháh's mosque, with its gilded domes flashing back the blaze of the Orient sun, reminds the visitor of their unenviable supremacy in barbarity and cruelty.

The Mahometans of India are a numerous and influential race; and carry themselves with a bearing at once self-conscious and contemptuous. They live, however, on the fame of the past: for at the present day their fortunes are fallen so low, that only by a revolution bordering on the miraculous can they possibly hope to regain anything of their former greatness. Their religious creed and their moral code bar the path of progress.

Mahometanism has undoubtedly had its history; but the system must not be credited with the glory which attended its early conquests and day of power. All it ever did was to excite a passionate fanaticism, which, like the ocean lashed into fury, cast forth wave after wave of barbarism over the fairest fields and most enlightened countries of the world. After its conquests came its own subjection; its brutal force fell before the mightier powers of intellect and civilization, and for a time a halo of borrowed glory hung round the Arab name. It was like the light which the moon sheds upon the earth—the reflection of a system purer and more glorious than itself. There were current ideas tending to progress which the Saracens could no more change than the fiat of a victorious king can suddenly change the current coin

jeweller had arrived in his capital with priceless gems; and, as he expected, he received orders to command his presence. The jeweller, who was in waiting in the outer court, instantly presented himself with his richly-laden casket, and laid it at the feet of His Highness, who ordered a eunuch to convey it to the harem. The ladies were beside themselves with delight. Unmindful of their dignity, they crowded round him, and seized each the piece that attracted her. The casket was speedily emptied, and the eunuch retraced his steps to the Hall of Audience. The delighted merchant made a profound salaam, and asked permission to retire without offending the royal ears with the mention of money.

Months passed, when one day a piece of the jewellery was sent to a resident jeweller for repairs. Then he wrote out his bill and handed it to the Wazir, who asked his Highness's permission to settle the account. When he heard the amount he flatly refused to consider it, and ordered the presence of the jeweller. When he appeared the Prince informed him that the amount was far in excess of their true value, and that until he made a large reduction he would not pass an order for payment. This the Hindu most solemnly asserted he could not possibly do; the figures were the lowest he could accept in justice to himself. 'But,' he said, 'let your Highness take only one piece to clear my expenses while waiting for your orders; the others I shall take back, provided they have not been used and are still in the same condition as when I delivered them.' His Highness was delighted with the proposal and ordered them to be collected at once and brought into the royal presence. Then it was found, as the Hindu very well knew, that every piece was more or less injured. The prince refused to pay, the merchant to abate his demand; and in this state of tension permission was given him to retire.

Weeks passed; the bill appeared to be forgotten. The merchant, anxious to be gone, feigned sickness,

and wrote to his firm to send him a Bombay physician. A heavy fee was given, in exchange for which a certificate was furnished in which it was stated that the jeweller's health had been seriously impaired by his prolonged residence in the Prince's capital, and that, to save his life, he must return home at once. This the jeweller forwarded with the intimation that the money might be paid into the bank, and forthwith took his departure.

The Prince was furious, and turning to the Wazir, asked his advice. He replied, 'Your Highness has read the letter and the doctor's certificate. All men must die. This infidel may die, leaving you indebted to him. You, too, must die; and your next meeting may be before the judgment-seat of the Great King. There all are equal. In that great darbar he will point you out and say, "This was the Prince of ——. I was a poor Hindu merchant. I went to his capital with my stock. He called me; bought my all, but refused to pay me the money. I—I was sick and ill; but robbed of all I possessed, I was unable to procure the necessaries of life, and returned home to die.' 'Stop! stop!' shouted the prince, 'pay him whatever he asked, even to the half of my kingdom, only do not allow him to bring such a charge against me in the dread hereafter.'

I numbered among my acquaintances a Maulvi, who prided himself upon his enlightenment. It was his constant boast that he had no prejudices except one; and that was in favour of astrology, a subject on which he had written to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone and received a most gracious reply.

He was a Suni in belief, a radical in politics; a devout admirer and ardent well-wisher of the Right Hon. John Bright, Lord Ripon, and the Mahdi, all of whom he placed in the same category. He had long since ceased to read everything, with the exception of the *Calcutta Statesman* and *Friend of India*, the Kurán, and the Mahometan traditions, all of which he

held in equal esteem. He was sure of Russia's triumph, England's defeat; and rejoiced in spirit at the thought of the dreadful retribution which would then overtake the tyrannical commissioners, magistrates, and collectors, who represent the British Ráj: officers whom he hated with the most bitter hatred. Still, he insisted, he was an enlightened gentleman, and was highly indignant whenever I ventured to assert that he had more than the ordinary share of human prejudices.

He was withal a very devout Mussulman. He never entered upon any duty, however trivial, without audibly uttering the words 'bis-millāh,' *i.e.*, 'in the name of God;' nor did he ever allow the duties of life to prevent him 'performing his prayers.' This necessitated his rising very early, for at 4 a.m. he used to visit a dirty, dingy Musjid, so shut in by the lofty houses of the Mahalla, and overshadowed by sickly neem trees that even by day it wore a melancholy, repulsive appearance. One dark, cold morning in January he had just entered its narrow gateway when he fancied he saw someone kneeling in prayer a few paces distant. He hastened to join the supposed worshipper; but, as he approached, the phantom disappeared. He was alone in the Musjid, and alone with thoughts which filled him with horror. There was certainly a form there: it had not left the Musjid by the door: no, it had disappeared without moving. It portended evil. It was Shaitán* himself, who, instead of quitting the Musjid like a serious worshipper, had entered his body, and possession could only mean sickness, perhaps death. He must be relieved at once if he would escape fatal consequences.

In the immediate neighbourhood of his house there was a large colony of Chamárs,† one of whom was a celebrated exorcist. At dawn he sent for him, told him his story, and enlisted his assistance against his enemy. The Chamár employed every charm known

* Satan. † Shoemakers.

to the professional exorcist, but to no purpose; the Maulvi was sick, and his vast dimensions decreased daily. I called to see him and found him very weak and ill. The cause of his sickness was only too obvious. About six feet from where he was lying there was a dirty drain vitiating the close atmosphere of his room, but when I suggested it as the cause he languidly replied, 'I don't smell it.' I ventured, despite his scepticism, to suggest a change of air and scene, but he had already delayed too long. Three days later his remains were borne, amid every expression of lamentation and grief, to the solitary graveyard beyond the city wall—a victim, as everyone thought, to demoniacal possession.*

There is no unnecessary delay in the burial of the dead in the East. The heat is so intense that it is impossible to defer the interment for many hours. As soon as the quivering heart ceases to pulsate the arrangements are carried forward with an expedition which would create suspicion in Europe. The case of the Maulvi will show how rapidly everything is accomplished. He died at 8 p.m.; he was at rest within the tomb at midnight.

This unseemly hurry is an absolute necessity, not the expression of indifference to the loss the family has sustained nor any want of respect to the departed. They cannot detain the body; but love compensates itself for the sudden withdrawal by the belief that the spirit is still present, and *to it*, after the third and before the expiration of the fortieth day, they accord a form of funeral. The ceremony is called Rooh Nikálna, *i.e.*, the turning out of the spirit. The third day is generally chosen. Then the bereaved family call a barber and request him to secure the disembodied spirit.

* The belief in demoniacal possession is unquestioned in the East. I have seen a woman, said to be possessed, tear herself in a manner too revolting to be described. Luke might have had her before him when he wrote chapter ix

In the evening this functionary enters the room in which the deceased expired and places a dish of water on the floor. He covers it carefully over, and on the cover places a lighted lamp with sufficient oil to burn all night. In the morning he re-enters and walks round the room, shouting, 'Come! Come! Come!' and approaching the lamp, says to the spirit, 'Enter this.' The ceremony ended, he calls the relations and friends, and greets them with the information that the spirit has entered the lamp and may now be borne away. They at once form in procession and march to the graveyard, carrying the dish and lamp with them, both of which are laid upon the grave which contains the spirit's former habitation, and there it is left.

But the spirit does not always remain. There are some that prefer the old home and wander back again. Besides these, there are many which continue to cherish undying enmity. They are the most troublesome; for they return only to revenge themselves upon the living: and it is found that they have a wonderfully correct recollection of the addresses of all their former acquaintances, neighbours, and friends. Spirits all the world over, if we are to believe those who have been blessed with visions of the departed, invariably select the hour when they may make their presence known with the greatest effect. The Mahometan spirit is no exception to the rule. When the noise and bustle of the day have given place to the stillness of night, and nothing is heard but the barking of hungry dogs, the blood-freezing, unearthly yell of jackals, and the weird screech of the owl, it loves to force its company upon terrified mortals. The lamp flickers as if a faint breeze stirred the atmosphere: in the dim uncertain light visions, neither of heaven nor earth, flit to and fro, till the spirit, sure of its surroundings, emerges into bold relief. Like Poe's raven,

'Not the least obeisance makes he.'

Calm and motionless it stands; pale and ghastly as

from the world of the dead, its fiery eyes the while exercising the fascination of terror upon its mortal enemy,

'Only this and nothing more.'

This power of self-revelation is, happily for mortal Mahometans, limited. It is confined to five swiftly-fleeting months; and even this period may be greatly curtailed by a very simple but very disgusting ceremony. When the sunlight overpowers the spirit's inherent power of self-illumination, the spell is broken, till night and silence favour its reappearance. The second visit, however, depends entirely upon the living. He may decline the honour by entertaining his self-invited guest when light and men inspire him with sufficient courage. This he does by baking a cake of murhwa and covering it with cooked chaulái,* crowned by a whole radish. Part he eats, the remainder is for the now invisible guest. Its portion is placed in the drain outside the house, beside which the host stands and presses his hospitality upon his unwelcome visitor by an urgent invitation to eat. 'Eat,' he cries at the pitch of his voice, as if the spirit were dull of hearing; 'come, eat!' Patiently he stands, for it would be in the highest degree unbecoming to exhibit any sign of impatience, but when sufficient time has elapsed for a hungry spirit to make a good meal he pitches the remainder to the cadaverous dogs that have witnessed the ceremony with wistful, expectant gaze. The spirit's power is broken. From henceforth it must rest satisfied with the company of ghouls in the silence of Hades till special permission is given it to revisit its old earthly home.

This privilege it may enjoy in the middle of May of each year. Then all spirits are allowed a holiday. As the Shabirát approaches, the condition of Mahometan houses indicates that guests are expected.

There is a general cleaning. The walls are freshly plastered, rubbish carried out, brass dishes refurbished, coppers retinned, while all the old pottery is broken and replaced by other pieces fresh from the kiln. All day long the several members of the family are busy, some preparing a sweetmeat called 'Halwa ki roti,' composed of sugar, clarified butter, and the kernels of sundry nuts, while others are busy preparing an amazing number of tiny lamps.

In the evening the house is a blaze of light. All the lamps are lit and placed wherever there is a recess capable of holding them. The transformation is complete; instead of a dirty, dingy house with greasy, filthy walls, we can imagine ourselves in one upon which the various trades have just applied the finishing touches of their art, lit up in honour of its first occupation. The scene upon which they throw their combined light is no less brilliant. The floor is occupied by the members of the family, who, clad in costumes of every variety of colour, sit round a cloth covered with sweetmeats. It is evident from the overflowing abundance that the expected guests must have excellent appetites: but this need not excite surprise, when we are solemnly assured that this is the only day in 365 in which spirits are permitted to break their fast. We may examine, without touching, the several dishes. Some are very full, others have a very dainty little portion. On inquiry we learn the reason: The amounts are graded to suit the varying capacity of the expected guests. The spirit of the man of mature years gets, it may be, six cakes; the spirit of the woman, four; of the child, the dainty portions in which children delight. None are forgotten; and, if spirits have still the capacity of gratitude left them, they must be delighted with the warmth and sincerity of their reception.

The elaborate preparations completed, the family, in the attitude of expectancy, commence the recital of a mystic verse called the 'Chár Khúl,' which no spirit

can resist. Their attendance is thus compelled and the feast may be proceeded with. Addressing Allàh, they point to a cake or heap of cakes and say, 'This is for my departed father; this for my departed mother; this for my departed son; this for my departed sister,' and so on till they have exhausted the entire list of those whom they have loved and lost.

This, it may be stated, is one of the superstitious ceremonies observed by the several sects of Mahometans; one in which all participate, the rich and poor, the ignorant and enlightened equally, for it is one by which they keep alive the memory of departed friends.

There is another superstition common to all, which, while well-known, may still be mentioned. They all believe in the evil eye; indeed, it is the omnipresent evil of their life, and the belief in its power is carried to lengths which those who have only a second-hand acquaintance with Eastern nations can but faintly realise.

I was sitting in the veranda of my bungalow about 10 a.m. one morning when a 'boxwalla,' or Indian pedlar, called and requested me to look at his goods. He put down his box and commenced the display of his wares by producing half-a-dozen quart bottles of different syrups. While thus engaged, his assistant, an unkempt dirty boy of twelve years, directed his attention to the miscellaneous assortment of haberdashery, oilman's stores, stationery, and the thousand and one useful and ornamental articles which comprise the pedlar's stock-in-trade. He had to reach over the bottles, and, in his anxiety to do business, forgot his wide airy sleeves. Over went the nearest bottle, smashed into a thousand pieces, while the syrup, which represented, perhaps, the value of a shilling, streamed off towards the gravel path. 'Oh, you wretch!' cried the hapless dealer, boxing the ears of his unfortunate apprentice. Then turning to me, he said, as if recalling the earlier scenes of the day, 'I wonder whose face I could have seen first this morning that

my business should have been attended by an occurrence so unfortunate.'

The evil eye is thus made to account for every misadventure, as well as for every occurrence for which they can assign no reasonable cause. It would be amusing, did it not indicate a degree of ignorance and superstition degrading to a people who claim a history of victory and enlightened empire.

Not far from my bungalow there lived a low caste Hindu who had been blessed with a most liberal helping of olive branches. He lived in a spacious house, but found that, notwithstanding its airy dimensions, it was none too large for the numbers who had to occupy it. In time this 'family mansion' was required for another, and the landlord, who was by no means satisfied with his tenant, gave him notice to quit. The would-be tenant was a Mahometan of lowly station; so far down, indeed, in the social scale, that his wife, untrammelled by customs which confine her more exalted sisters to the seclusion of the Zenana,* ventured on a tour of inspection. She reached the house and found the Hindu housekeeper at home. The latter lady strongly refused to leave; the house suited her and she was determined to stay. The Mussulmáni, thus defied, was equally determined to obtain possession, when the Hindu, finding her feelings and her reasons treated with contempt, said, 'Very well, do just what you like; but I may as well tell you that my husband knows magic, and can destroy man or beast with a look of his eye. Be cautious; you have a son upon whom all your hopes depend; I warn you that the day you enter he will be taken ill, and no one, however great his skill, will be able to restore him to health.' The Mussulmàni laughed at the threat, or rather she professed to do so, for inwardly she trembled lest something serious might really befall the child.

On the day appointed the family arrived, and the

* Harem.

Hindus had to move into a small house near by. That night it rained heavily. The bleak east wind blew a perfect hurricane, and lowered the oppressive temperature of the previous day nearly 10°. The child caught cold and sneezed, a circumstance which set the mother off upon the most painful and perplexing line of thought. He sneezed again; she woke her sleeping husband, and told him, in cautious suppressed whispers, the Hindu woman's threat. He coughed slightly—believing the worst, she gave herself over to a passion of tears;—a little more strongly,—and then her cries and wails rent the air and roused her still sleeping neighbours. Just then the cock-crow announced the approach of morning: and in the gray dawn the ejected family had the satisfaction of witnessing the hurried and undignified exit of their rivals, the father carrying the bed and cooking utensils, the wife with her treasure clasped to her heart. The mere act of quitting the house, however, could not cure the child. The Hindu woman had said that if once taken ill his sickness would defy the skill of the physician. It was no use then to trouble the doctors. Onward she hurried to the nearest mosque, from which the early worshippers were retiring, and, holding up her child, asked them to breathe upon it the breath of the righteous, that the spell might be broken and her child restored to health.

This is a curious belief. Every evening groups of women may be seen standing at the gates of the various mosques, waiting for the worshippers, whose breath is supposed to possess powerfully curative properties. As they retire, the mothers hold up their children, upon which they complacently breathe, as if they were doing the mothers a favour, and the children more good than all the physicians in the universe are capable of effecting.

They are thorough-going fatalists. I have frequently had discussions with my Mahometan friends as to the causes of their loss of empire and present

poverty. Many causes suggest themselves, some of which they admit, others they fiercely endeavour to refute. But when all has been said that can be said on the subject, they end by urging a reason which includes in itself and explains all the others, that is, 'the will of God;' in other words, their fate. Nothing is more annoying to an Englishman than to witness the apathy with which they accept as final a situation which might be altered, or, at least, considerably modified by means within their power. They carry it to absurd lengths, as the following ridiculous incident will show:

In India Europeans are compelled to keep up large poultry yards. Fowls, guinea-fowls, and ducks may be had in the bazaar at any time, but those who have seen them scraping together a precarious living on foul city heaps, and picking at offensive scraps disdained by jackals and vultures, turn from them with disgust; besides which, they are generally so ancient before the people consent to part with them that mastication is rendered impossible. Much to the detriment of our garden, we were obliged to keep a large supply on hand, for deaths were numerous, and the Indian weasel levied black mail unsparingly for the service he rendered in clearing the compound of dangerous reptiles. The ducks especially, notwithstanding generous treatment, have a nasty habit of contracting rheumatism. It seldom lasts long, generally terminating in premature death.

It was by no means an unknown visitor in our yard; and it happened once that a whole brood of ducklings were more or less seriously affected. The servant in charge was in despair as he saw them, one after the other, sit down and refuse their food. That no blame might be attached to him he reported each case as it occurred, bringing the bird with him to show the gravity of the situation. While he was standing with one of them in his hand, my wife ventured to ask him if he thought it was like

recover, when she received the following reply: 'I cannot tell; it is very ill. But all things are possible to God; He may restore it. Who knows? He disposes of all living. If it is His will, it must live; if not, it must die. We are helpless.'

Their life and death, as we have had only too certain experience, depends, to a large extent, on inferior powers. The sweeper himself is often the providence that decrees their decease.

Our first brood were most orderly in their manner of retiring. They took their departure one at a time, following each other at the distance of a day. The sweeper assured us he could cure them if we would only give him two annas' worth of garlic, black pepper and chillies. The cure was certainly worth the money and we determined to try; but, alas! it was given in vain; still they continued to die.

We were new to the country then, and as new to the management of ducks. We had no suspicion of the cause of the excessive mortality. While they were still continuing their unsatisfactory course of conduct we were favoured by a visit from a friend who had had a much longer experience of India than ourselves. In conversation we mentioned the extraordinary fatality to which our ducks were subject, and asked him if he could suggest a cure. Our innocence was greeted with a hearty peal of laughter. 'Yes,' he replied, 'I can. Call the sweeper and tell him that for each duck that dies from this date he will have to pay four annas.' We did so; not another duck died. The cure was effectual. The fact was that he killed them for his own use, and in the name of medicine, asked, and got, the price of the stuffing.

The fate of the individual is one; that of the community quite another. The two are differently determined. That of the individual seven days after birth; that of the community annually.

For the first six days after the birth of a child, it, or with its mother, is separated from the family.

During that time they are unclean. On the seventh day the child is bathed for the first time, and when it is thus purified God writes the history of its life upon its forehead. Its manner of life, with all its brightness and sadness, is irrevocably determined. Like a river hemmed in by its rock-bound banks it must henceforth flow in a stated groove.

The fate of the community, as distinct from that of the individual, is arranged annually. Fifteen days after the appearance of the May moon, God descends from heaven, accompanied, like a king on his progress, by all the angels, and in darbár decides the events of the coming year. Everything is arranged. It is determined how many shall die; how many are to be born to supply their places; what plagues are to happen; what tempests are to sweep land and sea; how many houses are to be thrown down; how many trees are to be rooted up; everything, indeed, to the most trivial, is decided, so that they at least believe

> 'There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we will.'

While this doctrine continues to exercise its present power over the community, their chances of worldly success are exceedingly limited. It strikes at the root of enterprise, and is frequently attended by the most pernicious effects. There are many cases in which it takes the extreme form of Micawberism. Not a few pass their life waiting for whatever may turn up. They positively refuse to exert themselves, while they excuse their natural indolence by saying, 'Everything is determined; what is to be, will be. If God intends that we should become rich, rich we shall become, without any personal exertion; if He intends that we shall be poor, poor we shall have to remain, despite our labour.' And poor it is quite certain they do remain. Their life is a prolonged misery, and a sufficient refutation to their belief.

The following story from the Tota Kahání is an excellent reflex of the popular belief:

In a certain city there was a silk weaver who was noted for his industry. He plied his craft so zealously that he scarcely allowed himself rest. Still he was poor; and, work as he would, he could not mend his fortune. He had a neighbour and friend engaged in the manufacture of a coarse, thick material. One day he quitted his loom and started to pay him a visit. What was his surprise on entering the house to find it comfortably, almost luxuriously, furnished, while he and his family were adorned with jewels of great value. He could not help contrasting their trades and their respective conditions. 'I,' he said to himself, 'weave cloth fit for princes. What then can be the reason that I can scarcely earn salt sufficient for my food, while this weaver of coarse stuffs has laid up such immense wealth?' For once he was thoroughly dissatisfied with his lot. Home he went, smarting from a sense of injury, and said to his wife, 'I leave this ungrateful city at once. Here I cannot consent to remain, for the people neither understand me nor value my labour. I must go elsewhere to seek my fortune.'

His wife listened to his complaint; then said, 'It is no use leaving home. Don't go. Whatever is in your fate you will realize here; more you will not earn, go where you will.'

It was in vain to advise him; his resolution was formed, and nothing she could say had the slightest weight with him. A few days afterwards he set out on his travels.

His journey brought him to a large city full of wealthy inhabitants. In it he set up his loom and found a ready sale for his silks. Success attended his every effort; wealth literally flowed in upon him; and, in time, his circumstances were so easy that he resolved to retire from trade and return home. Accordingly he packed up his effects and started off,

elated with the thought of having falsified his wife's fears.

His way lay through a long lonely jungle, and night overtook him while he was still exerting himself to reach the village which offered security at the extreme end. He was obliged, therefore, to remain exposed to all its dangers till morning. Lest thieves should carry off his treasure, he resolved to remain on guard all night; but the oppressive stillness which reigned around lulled him into a sense of security; sleep, too, began to assert its dominion over his wearied frame, and, despite his efforts and anxiety, he dozed off into a deep sleep.

Meanwhile, a thief, out on a foraging expedition, reached the place where he slept, and noticing the care he had exercised to hide his cloth, concluded that it contained something worth stealing. Indifferent to danger, and trusting to the density of the jungle, he seized the cloth and hurried off. His roughness roused the sleeping weaver, who, without quite knowing what he did, set off in pursuit. The thief had every advantage, and, before the weaver had time to realize the situation, had disappeared into a glade, where he sought him in vain.

The labour of months was gone. Empty-handed he could not possibly return home. With the return of morning he retraced his steps and re-established his business. Prosperity again attended him. He earned more than ever, and concluded that Providence was compensating him for all his toils and losses. Before many months he was again in a position to retire on what was to him a sufficient competency.

This time he used every expedition, and succeeded in passing the jungle before nightfall; reached what he had every reason to believe was a place of safety, and gave himself up to slumber. His bundle, however, had excited the cupidity of a thief early in the day. No opportunity of possessing himself of it had occurred during the journey, but he kept on his track at a

sufficient distance to allay suspicion. At night he stole up close to him, and, finding him in a deep sleep, quietly carried off the hard-earned fortune.

The unfortunate weaver woke to find his treasure gone, and fell into a soliloquy on his fate. 'There is,' he mused, 'no gold in *my* fate; this is why each time thieves have carried off my earnings.'

It was no use, he considered, to retrace his steps: he must risk laughter and return as poor as when he started. The most humiliating experience was to tell his wife all that had befallen him. When he had finished, she said: 'Did I not tell you before you set out that you cannot reap more nor less than your fate, go where you will? You would not listen to me, but started off on this unfortunate journey. Pray tell me what benefit you have derived from it?'

But the weaver was dumb. Covered with shame, he had neither word of explanation, nor defence to offer.

CHAPTER II.

Mahometan sobriety—The 'Nabob' who pulled a well into the shade · Blackmail — Credulity of Tourists — How the only honest Commissioner was bribed—The Contractor who burned his fingers—An Unfaithful Servant—The Servant who had his palm greased—'Who fell from the house-top, you or I?'—Modes of consuming Opium—Visit to an Opium-den—An Opium-eater's Dream—Preparations of Opium—Women and Opium—Mahometans and Brandy—An advanced Mahometan—Cheap Tobacco, and how to light it—Chewing.

THE Kurán forbids the use of intoxicating liquors, and, for the most part, it must be said of the faithful that they entirely abstain from their use. In some cases they carry their aversion so far that they refuse, even when seriously ill, to use any medicinal preparation into which spirit enters.

In this matter they are fond of contrasting themselves with Christians; always, I need hardly say, to their own advantage. The distinguishing characteristic of the Mahometan, they assert, is sobriety, of the Christian, drunkenness; and now when a Muslim abjures the faith of his race and accepts Christianity—which is becoming increasingly frequent—they say he has become a drunkard, and that altogether irrespective of his feelings regarding liquors. They wish to imply that all Christians are drunkards, that it is part of the Christian creed to indulge in intoxicating drinks. This is wilful ignorance, or else a wilful perversion of the truth. They *ought* to know, and *do* know, that drunkenness is a vice condemned by Christianity, and one which it endeavours to correct. Ignoring its teachings, they point to the iniquitous

action of Government, or judge it by those who are designated Christians; and it is an unfortunate fact, that in this respect a great many of our countrymen in India set them a most pernicious example. Drinking—*not drunkenness*—is universal; so wide-spread that someone has said that when the distant ages search for relics of British occupation and supremacy, they will find them only in the ubiquitous beer and brandy bottle. In some circles it has become an accepted doctrine that without stimulating liquors it is impossible for Englishmen to exist in India. This explanation of Anglo-Indian drinking customs is a mere cover for a wide-spread fondness; for, instead of preserving health, it ruins the constitution as well as the character of thousands of our countrymen.

If, then, we have an evil reputation among our Mahometan fellow-subjects for drunkenness, we have earned it for ourselves, and shall continue to deserve it as long as gentlemen forget themselves in private and at public banquets lose their self-respect so far as to earn the censure of the entire community, European as well as Native.

I am not, however, disposed to assent to the Mahometan claim. Beer and brandy are not the only intoxicants known among men; nor need they drink distilled liquids to produce intoxication. Mahometans have others equally powerful, and quite as destructive. If they abhor wine, they love opium; and that for reasons which would suffuse the European wine-bibber's face with shame.

There is a hypocritical inconsistency in their conduct when they condemn Europeans for their drinking customs. At such times they forget all about the huge beam in their own eye, while they point out, with all the embellishments of an unfriendly criticism, the mote that is in their brother's. It may be wilful forgetfulness; or it may be that they are credulous enough to believe, that because Englishmen live in cantonments, they know nothing of their social

failings. Englishmen live in public: their homes are overrun by Hindu and Mahometan servants, who delight their neighbours by relating all that transpires in the domestic life of their employers; every vice is magnified to preposterous dimensions, and the European race is thus represented as the very incarnation of all that Easterns hold in greatest disrepute. The Mahometan lives in seclusion; he avoids publicity; no one witnesses his domestic vices, and he is much too common for the Hindu, or indeed, for his Mahometan neighbours to discuss. His failings are buried in the seclusion of a quiet circle or uninquiring neighbourhood. Hence they conclude that the Western strangers are ignorant of their mode of life, and that they may attack them without fear of disagreeable reprisals. This position is, however, somewhat difficult to maintain when a European is in a position to confront them with the statements of their writers and the condemnatory reflections of their own current sayings. What follows will, I think, show that theirs is a position not altogether unassailable.

Among the Mahometan inhabitants of Benares there was a nawāb who had attained to the pinnacle of fame as an opium-eater. He inherited a considerable estate from his father, and might have ended his career in comfort, if not luxury, had he not given way to his passion for opium. Thoroughly enslaved, he neglected his interests; and discovered at last that instead of being courted and flattered, he was forsaken by his whilom friends and refused the smallest credit by tradesmen who had formerly solicited his custom. Money he had none; and his family were on the verge of starvation, when his wife said to him: 'Once you were rich and had no need to labour; now you are poor, and must earn your daily bread. Instead of lounging about in the house all day in idleness you would do well to go in quest of work, lest you and your family die of hunger.'

'Very well,' he replied, 'I shall do as you advise.

Make up a number of opium pills and a few cakes; to-morrow I shall start for Patna in search of employment.'

On the morrow he set out and walked for a short time, the fierce sun throwing the whole power of its light and heat into his face as he journeyed eastward. Tired with such unusual exertions he sat down to refresh himself at a road-side well. A goblet of water and a few pills comprised his repast; but they were amply sufficient. Dreams full of wonder flitted over his mind. The dreary depressing thought of poverty vanished before the charmer. He thought no more of his starving wife and children, but he was seriously concerned about the comfort of the well at which he had just refreshed himself. There it was out in the full blaze of the sun, while, immediately to the west of it there was a large, shady pipul tree. Why was it not built to the west, where, sheltered by the dense foliage, it might enjoy life in comfort? His hazy brain was sadly agitated, and at last he determined to attach a rope to the structure and pull it into the shade. All day long he pulled, ever with increasing evidences of success. At first the shadow drew nearer; then it touched the platform; and, at last, the sun, having nearly finished its day's journey, sank behind the pipul, which now threw its grateful shade like a dense curtain over the entire structure. With a sigh of relief he withdrew the rope, satisfied that for once he had done a good deed and deserved well of the invisible powers.

Musing thus he prepared to proceed. Had he not started with his face to the sun? Facing it again he strode boldly forward. Before long the lofty houses of a city could be seen through the openings in the foliage, a sight which afforded him infinite relief.

'What city is this?' he asked of a villager he encountered driving home his team.

'This? Why, this is Benares,' responded the ploughman.

'Benares! Well, that is wonderful!' he exclaimed. 'But then it is the reward of virtue. I left a city of that name only this morning, and Allāh has already led me to one like it and of the very same name, because I did a virtuous action by the way.'

Exchanging salutations with the astonished labourer he proceeded on his journey. A few miles brought him to a well-known musjid in which the devout were assembled for evening prayer.

'What musjid is this?' he demanded of a by-stander.

'This is —— musjid.'

'Well, well!' he exclaimed, 'this is astonishing. My fate is at last propitious. I left home this morning for Patna, but for a good deed done by the way Allāh has brought me to a city of the same name and exactly like the one I left. This musjid is like one in my native city, and of the very same name; but then, it is the reward of virtue.'

He entered the city: the illusion was complete. Since everything corresponded with his own, might it not have an opium-eater as famous as himself. Accosting a shopman, he asked:

'Is there any famous opium-eater in this city?'

'Yes,' replied the man.

'Can you give me his name and address?' he asked.

His astonishment knew no bounds when the shopman gave his own name and address, and naïvely added, 'He is just like you.'

'Well, well!' he exclaimed, 'this is more marvellous than ever: however, it all comes of being virtuous. No doubt he will be delighted to entertain me.'

He had no difficulty in finding the house. The way thither looked like a well-known picture; but when he stood before the crumbling mansion he was more utterly bewildered than ever. 'Why,' he exclaimed, 'it is exactly like my own in every respect: quite as large and quite as ruinous.' While musing at the seeming coincidence, the female slave appeared at the

door, holding a child by the hand. They, too, were like his own slave and youngest child. If he was astonished, they were equally so to see him there, when they thought he was many miles on his way to Patna. The child ran into the house to tell his mother; the slave stood fixed to the spot in astonishment.

'Is the nawāb at home?' he asked.

The slave could not find words to answer his question, and did not find her tongue till he asked, 'May I enter?' a question to which she could only say, 'Certainly.'

His wife had been prepared for his entrance, and appeared in the dálán to receive him. He was amazed at seeing her; the more so as she bore such a very striking resemblance to his own wife. He owed an explanation of his entrance, and commenced by a recital of his adventures, at every fresh point expressing his astonishment, when a blow from a slipper made him spring from his seat. Turning round, there was the lady, the wife, as he supposed, of his new-found friend, yet so like his own, flushed with anger, about to repeat the blow.

'Stop, good lady!' he cried, 'pray stop! This is just what my wife does. I suppose I must be like your husband, since you are like my wife, but I assure you it is no more than a likeness. Pray stay your hand till his return.'

Travellers in the East, who have favoured the public with an account of their experiences, invariably notice the wide diffusion of the word 'bakhshish.' Heard first at Alexandria or Port Said, they meet it wherever Mahometanism has penetrated or the Arabic language spread. It is in everybody's mouth, and all classes seem to demand it. In India, side by side with it, we encounter another word of evil omen called 'dastúrí,' which lexicographers have rendered in English, 'perquisites paid to servants by one who sells to their masters,' instead of by the less elegant but more exact rendering, 'blackmail.' Everybody preys upon the

foreigner. The coachmen who drive you to the bazaar insist on receiving their dastúrí from the merchants with whom you have dealt. Nor will they move till they get it. It is their right, they warmly assert, and they insist upon getting it, even though they should delay their fare for an hour. Time is no object to them. When the stranger pays for it, why should it be? When a lady has been so unkind as to purchase anything from the draper in the absence of her ayah, she is called to account at once on that lady's return, and asked whether she has kept back the dastúrí for her, and if not, why not? seeing it is her right. The cook gets from a halfpenny to threepence on every two shillings worth of the necessaries of life he purchases for his master; this in addition to the exorbitant price demanded by the dealers because it is for a European. If anyone, ignorant of Hindustáni and the ways of the country, ventures into the bazaar by himself, he is picked up by a dalál,* who discovers what he requires and leads him to the shop where it is sold. If he is certain of the customer's ignorance, he tells the shopman what is required, adding the word, 'kona,' a corner, or 25 per cent. It means, 'Charge well, for I must have 25 per cent. of the price.'

Servants, too, prey upon each other. The syce, *i.e.*, groom, if allowed, will always ask to pay the grass-cutter, because, when allowed to do so, he is able to deduct a little for himself in consideration of his kindness in having called him. Servants value the appointment not for the pay, but on account of what they are able to make. When an appointment falls vacant intending applicants inquire from those who know something about it, how much it is worth in 'darmāhā,' *i.e.*, fixed salary, and in 'yáft,' *i.e.*, perquisites and bribes. They will take an appointment at 4 rupees per mensem as a chaprassi, or messenger, with the greatest alacrity, because it puts them in a position

* Commission agent.

sometimes to make 40 rupees in yáft. Indeed, I have heard of men on 4 rupees who were making over 100 rupees per mensem in this way. They are sometimes bold enough to demand a fee from Europeans. In 1885 the Deputy Settlement Officer sent me a summons to appear in his court with the trust deeds of the bungalow in which I was living. The Government chaprassi who brought it *demanded* a douceur for bringing it; and, when I asked why it should be paid, he replied, 'I get it from everyone to whom I deliver a summons,' which of course meant that he compelled the helpless Hindu to pay it under terror of a threat. I told him I should report him; a threat to which he replied, 'You can do so,' as if he were not in the least afraid of consequences. When I reached the Deputy's camp I did report it; but nothing whatever was done to the man. It is useless for the Government to expect secrecy for any measure, however important, if there are native clerks in the office. Copies of all the papers can always be had for a trifle. Every appointment, however trivial, is made to pay. The petty officer can see nothing wrong in his conduct. If you point out the impropriety, his instant rejoinder is that he is in good and honourable company; his superiors do it, why should not he? You cannot, however, bring it home to them. No one will admit it; no one will give evidence against another when the practice enriches all the way round. Higher officers are, of course, very careful that proof shall be impossible. I heard of a Tahsildár, *i.e.*, joint magistrate, on 300 rupees per mensem, who retired, while still young, worth twenty or thirty lakhs of rupees; but it would have been impossible to convict him of malpractices, because, while everybody in his district knew of them, no one would dare to give evidence.

Why should they? they ask. Do not Europeans make hay while the sun shines? It is unfortunately the prevalent belief that all our countrymen in Government service accept bribes. It need not be said that

the statement refutes itself by its very comprehensiveness, even if the high character of most of the picked men who compose the services did not brand it as one of those malicious statements made by designing natives to screen themselves, and bring their rulers into contempt among the people, by whom, as a rule, they are deservedly respected. Their brilliant administration of a great empire bespeaks a standard of character to which such venality, on an extensive scale, is impossible; it is at least a suspicious circumstance that while they will give you name, date, amount, no one can be found possessed of sufficient moral courage to prefer the charge.

Tourists in India are much too credulous. They would do well to receive with caution the sweeping statements so often brought against their countrymen. For the most part they are the vapourings of jealousy, disappointment, or ungratified ambition; sometimes of the bitter race antagonism stirred up by Lord Ripon's well intended, but unfortunate legislation. Strangers are carried away by fluency: they think it is the expression of a real grievance, when those who best know the conditions of the people are well aware that if the desired boon were granted it would become, under present conditions, a positive evil. Let it be remembered that education, widely as it has spread, has not altered the moral tone of the different races that people the great peninsula. They are still adherents of a system brimming over with impurity, and pass much of their time, not in intellectual pursuits, but in pleasures, the nature of which is too repulsive for description. Men do not shake themselves free from old-established customs, however disgusting, in the lifetime of a generation; and though I gladly admit that education has done much to raise the intelligence of the people, I am bound to remark that their moral consciousness has yet to be educated. But as I have no intention of saying anything which would be offensive to men who are, notwithstanding, fighting against

inherited tendencies, I pursue this subject no further.

A commissioner, an officer of her Majesty's army, enjoyed among natives the enviable distinction of being regarded as the only English officer who was above taking bribes. One evening a number of very rich bankers were discussing the members of the Civil Service, when someone mentioned the commissioner and ventured to praise his integrity.

'Nonsense!' said another, 'every man has his price. Everything depends upon the amount. He has never been guilty, because he has never been tempted by any sum worthy of his acceptance. If you will bear part of the expense I shall prove that even he suffers from the common failing.' They all agreed.

Next morning a carriage drove up to the commissioner's bungalow. The only occupant was a boy about eight years of age. He was dressed in a loose flowing robe of finest silk embroidered with gold. His cap seemed one mass of gold, so richly was it overlaid with gold embroidery, while a necklet of precious stones circled his unprotected neck. The officer was sitting in the veranda and wished him good morning.

'I have come to play with your son,' said the boy, stepping out.

'He has gone out for his morning ride,' replied the commissioner, 'and I expect it will be some time before he returns.'

The lad looked downcast, and was about to retreat to his carriage again, when, turning suddenly round, he said abruptly:

'Give him these, please;' saying which he opened a handsomely worked bag, and poured on a teapoy a handful of diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and pearls.

The commissioner coloured deeply, gave a hasty look round, laid the paper he had been reading over them, and returned the low salaam of the retreating visitor.

Thus, they say, they disposed of the only honest official in the service of the Government of India. Fortunately the maligned officers can afford to laugh at such stories; and have their revenge too sometimes, for even the Hindu occasionally misjudges the man with whom he has to deal.

There was an engineer in the N.W.P., who had to advertise for tenders for the construction of a small bridge over one of the public roads. In the city where he was stationed there was a contractor to whom, for some reason, he had taken a dislike. He had always avoided him as much as possible, but was obliged occasionally to meet him on business. A few days after the advertisement appeared the tenders began to come in. While looking them over, his bearer entered the room carrying a basket full of fruits and vegetables. He, scarcely looking up, remarked, 'Take them away.'

'But——' said the servant.

'But what?' hastily interrupted the busy engineer.

'It is very heavy, sir.'

'Heavy! Let me see it,' said the officer; and lifting the fruit, he found it contained a large sum of money.

'Who did it come from?' he demanded.

But before the bearer had time to reply, the contractor was announced, and a moment afterwards entered the room.

'*You* have sent me this?' said the engineer, when the servant had retired.

'Yes,' said the contractor, with a show of secrecy; 'I am anxious to get the contract, and have sent this money in part payment of your commission.'

'Thank you,' said the engineer, dismissing his visitor.

An hour afterwards he ordered his cart, put the money in a black bag, and set off for the Government treasury, where, without remark, he deposited the amount and received a receipt.

A few days sufficed to come to a decision upon the

various tenders, which were duly forwarded to Government with his recommendation. His superior officers accepted his decision, and it was soon announced that the contract had been given to a contractor belonging to another part of the country.

The contractor who had prepaid the commission was furious, and determined to have his revenge. He set about it by insinuating dishonest practices. The rumour reached official quarters, and the engineer was called upon to defend himself.

He at once admitted receiving the money; enclosed the receipt, which showed it had been placed to the credit of Government, and gave the name of the would-be corrupter of Government officers. Government determined to prosecute. But the wily Hindu had fled; leaving, however, a good round sum, which was appropriated by way of fine.

This is a very long preface to a very short story. I commenced about servants levying blackmail upon their foreign masters; but they are by no means particular; failing foreigners they prey upon each other.

There was another opium-eater whose passion was dāhi, *i.e.*, thick, sour milk. At a stated time every day he indulged in an anna's worth. His invariable custom was to give his servant the money, swallow his pill, and doze off into the opium-eater's paradise. When he awoke he called for, and ate the dāhi.

Annoyed with the ancient servant who had served him long and faithfully, and who knew his habits as well as himself, he dismissed him and engaged in his place one who had been many months out of employment. This man was deeply in debt, and made a point of helping himself as liberally as possible from his master's effects to pay his creditors. Before he had been many days in his new appointment, it occurred to him that he might make a little off the dāhi. The plan was simple in the extreme. Instead of buying four-pice worth, he would only buy two;

the other two he should regard as his own legitimate perquisite. The day after he settled his plan, he proceeded to act upon it. When his master was sound asleep, he went to the bazaar and bought half the usual quantity. Returning as rapidly as possible, he entered the room, touched the sleeper's moustache with the dāhi, placed the remainder beside him and retired to await his summons.

Shortly afterwards the master awoke, and shouted for his attendant, who, bounding in, asked his pleasure.

'Bring the dāhi,' said the master.

'The dāhi, sir; why, here it is by your side.'

The opium eater stared at the smallness of the quantity and remarked, 'This is very little; only half the usual quantity. How is this?'

'Your honour,' replied the guilty servant, without the least misgiving, 'ate half the amount between taking your opium and falling asleep. It is even now on your lordship's moustache. If you will be good enough to touch it with your tongue, you will find that what your slave says is true.'

The master, thus urged, put out his tongue and drew it slowly along his moustachios as if enjoying the sensation. There could be no doubt they tasted of dāhi; like one, therefore, who had thrown suspicion upon an innocent man, he said, 'True, I must have eaten it before falling asleep.'

Success in wickedness is a direct encouragement to its continuance. The servant was much too sharp not to improve the opportunity his master's failing afforded him. If he had succeeded once, why not again; if he had successfully deducted a half, might he not with equal success deduct half of what he had thus far allowed him? At least he could but try.

At the usual hour his master dozed off after giving him the four pice. He went to the bazaar and bought the smallest quantity procurable. On his return he repeated the operation of the previous day; but it was

less even than he thought; before he had applied it as liberally as he desired, the whole was exhausted. He determined, however, to risk the detection. Laying down the empty leaf in which he had brought it, he retired.

The opium-eater awoke and called him. He bounded in and went straight for the empty leaf, saying, 'Here it is, your highness;' but when he reached it, he stopped in well-feigned surprise.

'Why, sir!' he exclaimed, 'you have already eaten it. Yes! yes! it is even now on your moustachios. Do touch them with your tongue, and you will find that what your slave says is true.'

There was no denying such proof. The victim could only say, 'I had delightful dreams. I dreamed I was in an ocean of dāhi; thoughts which must have come while I was eating my poor allowance. Alas! alas! that it was only a dream.'

Servants will have their dasturi, however small the amount they have to spend. A story is told of a gentleman who wished to prove whether the report was correct, or merely a slander on the domestic servant class. Calling one, he gave him an anna and told him to bring him its value in grain. On his return he asked:

'Did you get your dasturi on that purchase?'

'Yes,' was the reply, 'I got a pice.'

Giving him a pice, he told him to go and fetch its value in salt. On his return he said:

'You did not get dasturi on that!'

'Yes, I did,' said the servant, 'I got just a little for myself.'

Giving him the smallest Indian coin, a pie, he told him to go and fetch its value in oil. On his return he asked, laughingly:

'What dasturi did you get off that?'

The servant had been obliged to bring it in the palm of his hand, the quantity was so small; rubbing it over his head, he said:

'What adhered to my hands; enough to anoint my hair, sir.'

If the stories regarding opium-eaters have any basis in fact, they must, as a class, be easily imposed upon. They are of course very highly coloured when served up for public amusement; but when every allowance has been made for what might be called legitimate exaggeration, a strong foundation of fact will generally be found underlying them. There is a story told of an opium-eater, who, rich and powerful, lived in a large mansion surrounded by all the pomp of wealth and luxury in which an Eastern delights. The top of the ancestral mansion was flat, and afforded him absolute privacy, together with the advantages of fresh air and abundant sunshine. But for some reason the builders had neglected to protect it with parapets; a circumstance of very rare occurrence in the East However low, there is always a wall which gives you a sense of security. This unprotected terrace was the one place he loved, for here he was in the habit of dreaming away his hours of intoxication. To one who lay still there was comparatively little danger, and this he generally succeeded in doing. One day, however, being more unsteady than usual, he stumbled toward the edge and tumbled over into the lane beneath. In a moment the whole household was alarmed by his cry of distress, and there was a general run to his aid. When they reached him, they found him in a sitting posture, with an expression of wonder on his face. 'What's the matter,' he asked, 'did anyone fall from the housetop? Who was it? You or I?'

'We fell,' was the unanimous response; an announcement which he greeted with the most hilarious laughter. Up he started and accompanied them into the house, stopping by the way to enjoy his amusement. 'You fell off the housetop, did you? Well! well! that was a tamásha.'* Thinking him uninjured

* Play.

they thought they might at last be candid and tell him the true state of affairs.

'Your honour,' said the spokesman, 'we did not fall; you did, but since you have sustained no injury there can be no harm in undeceiving you.'

In an instant his laughter and merriment changed to shrieks and agonizing cries. 'I am dying! I am dying!' he shouted, 'I am sore all over; my bones are broken. Call the doctor; quick, call the doctor.'

But his wails were soon silenced. The servants shouted in chorus, 'It isn't true. You did not fall, we did;' and again he gave way to a renewed paroxysm of laughter.

It must not be concluded from the above that eating —or rather swallowing—opium pills is the only mode of consumption. Many smoke it. There is, however, a difference between the eater and smoker; it is this, that while the eater is addicted to the vice in the privacy of his home, the smoker is thoroughly sociable. He smokes in company: and to do this he has to frequent one of the all-too-numerous dens established for his convenience.

Let us visit one.

We leave the main thoroughfare, and strike off into a perfect labyrinth of lanes, so narrow that the flanking houses appear to lean towards each other above our heads. It is a fiercely hot morning in June, but protection is unnecessary; the shadow of the houses is amply sufficient. What houses! Decay is everywhere present, and, but for the few passengers we meet, it would require little stretch of imagination to fancy ourselves in some long forsaken, ruined city. Yet behind these gloomy, windowless, crumbling walls there are thousands of women pent up like prisoners; with this difference, that they prefer their prison to the gaze of men whose idea of woman is so degraded.

In this labyrinth we at last halt before a closed door. There is nothing about the house to distinguish

it from the numerous residences around. All is quiet. Perhaps our business is guessed, for a man, with a piece of moist opium as large as a pigeon's egg in his hand, approaches and makes a profound salaam. Can he be of any service? From his look it seems exceedingly probable; perhaps he is there to allure the unwary into the den. Whatever he is we accept his offer, and are pointed to the door before which we stand. The sound of voices has, meanwhile, reached the doorkeeper, and as we go forward to knock, the door is cautiously opened by a young man with a very sallow complexion, who, while he holds the door ajar, bars the way. His drawn features and the peculiar expression of the eye arrests our attention. He, alas! is one of the victims.

'Do you come here often?'

'Often? Every day. Opium-smoking is a habit which, when once formed, never leaves you. It is useless trying to give it up; it cannot be done.'

'No, it cannot be given up,' says an old, decrepit man who has taken his position behind the younger victim. 'It cannot be done. I have smoked for over forty years. During that time it has been my master; I its very humble and obedient slave.'

'Why do you smoke it? Does it afford you any pleasure?

'The pleasure of intoxication,' is the answer.

'How much will intoxicate a man?'

'That depends entirely upon how long he has used it,' replies a new-comer, more respectably dressed than the others. 'Some smoke one pice worth, some two; many smoke as much as eight annas worth a day, if they can afford it, but all cannot.'

The house is by no means inviting, but now that we have come so far and secured their good will we may as well see the interior.

'May we go inside?'

'Come in,' is the unanimous invitation from a whole chorus of voices. Our first impulse on entering is to

rush out into the impure air of the narrow street again, for it is sweet compared with the smoky atmosphere within. The odour is indescribable, beyond this, that it is painfully sickly. We must bear it, however, if we wish to survey the interior. There are two rooms, both full to the door, although it is only seven a.m.; a fact which at once excites our surprise. They are ready with an answer. 'We cannot work till we have smoked. The hand shakes so much that it is impossible to hold anything steadily, or to do work requiring exactness. The smoking steadies the body for a time.'

'How much do you smoke at a time?'

'One pice worth. Each of these costs one pice,' says the young man who opened the door, taking up and showing us a small paper, shaped like a colour saucer, full of semi-liquid opium.

'How do you smoke it?'

'Do you see these pipes?' he asks, pointing to two articles which might have been mistaken for very primitive hammers. 'We smoke it in these.' The pipes indicated consist of a straight piece of bamboo about a foot in length, to which is attached a round, hollow earthenware ball pierced by a small hole at the side. In this hole a little of the semi-liquid opium is placed by an attendant. The smoker reclines near a dirty lamp, over the flame of which he holds the hole, and inhales the smoke by a rapid succession of seemingly painful inspirations. Not the least sign of smoke is seen till the opium is exhausted. Then he stops, and blows out a huge cloud from mouth and nostrils. More is quickly applied, and the smoking repeated till the amount contained in the paper is exhausted. Intoxication ensues, and the miserable victim drops off into a heavy sleep, described as a succession of dreams weird and foolish, which may or may not afford him pleasure. I give the following from a native book called 'The Story of the Cat, the Rat, and the Opium-Eater,' as an illustration of the

absurd fancies possible to the muddled brain of the opium-smoker:

'I opened the opium box, took out a portion, smoked it in my hukka, and fell forward into the mud. In my dream I saw a city called Shakrábád* surrounded by walls. What was my surprise when I discovered they were composed of *Khoya!* They had massive gates, the frames of which were composed of *dar bhest;* within, the bázárs were made of *barfi,* besides which they were all carpeted with *lauzád.* The soil was *til shakri;* the thatch on the houses was made of *jelabis;* the doors were made of *batash-pheni;* the hasps were made of *ghewar;* the musjid domes were *brigkhand;* the brushes with which the streets were swept were *seo;* it had rivers of milk; canals of *sherbet;* the sand on the banks was composed of *shakrtari;* the quagmires were *halwa;* it had drains of honey; hills of *khaja;* while the roads were made of *shakrpara.* The king named Shekh Nabat was in residence, protected by squadrons of ant cavalry; an army of bees, the officers of which were wasps; there were besides companies of mosquitoes, all of which were in constant attendance. Ever ready for action, they were always under arms. Their helmets were cucumbers; their shields *kira;* their guns *kakara.* I looked upon this delightful scene, and while pondering upon so much that was strange, regaled myself with food and sweetmeats. I then made a large air bag, upon which to ride, of black opium, a saddle of cream, stirrups of *Batasha,* a bridle of *Burhuja ka Kata,* ornaments of *iláchídāna,* a crupper of *Batash-pheni,* a whip of a *habulbabul,* a spear of sugar-cane, a shield of *Rewri,* a sword of Tilshakri, and a quiver of sugar-candy. Thus armed I mounted my steed and set off, pitching sand into its mouth as I rode forward. I came to

* City of sugar. The names following in italics for which there is no English rendering, are those of Indian sweetmeats, cakes, etc.

the banks of the river of milk, and there I saw a boat of *Halwa-sohan*. The sailor in charge was made of sugared *dál*, the mast of *Barh-sala*. Seeing it sailing about, I shouted to the boatman, "O sailor, come here and take me over in your boat." He stared at me, but gave no response. I thought, surely he will attend to hard words if he will not comply with my request, so I shouted, "You infidel, if I get hold of you I will tie your hands, break all the teeth in your head, and make you swallow them." When he heard this, he was afraid, for he thought, "If this opium-eater gets hold of me he will break my head and eat it; he is not a man but a demon." He therefore hastened to obey, and I went for a sail on the lake of *Halwái*. But when they told me both banks were of ghee I got frightened, and catching hold of my steed, got away from the lake. I turned away from it and landed on the other side of the ditch of honey, where I broke and ate some of the *shakrpara* stones. After this I went towards the city. This was the signal for war. With an army I reached the door of the palace of the Princess Shekh Nabat. She was seated on a bed made of cocoanut, upon a carpet of *Halwa*. The pillows were pistachio nuts, the frills *ánárdána*, and the curtains of *amras*. When she heard the terrible news that I was come to fight, she commanded her army—here comes a long list of names—to arm themselves with spears of *bájra*, and shouted, "Catch this opium-eater and drink him up like a beverage." The war raged till noon, but it was against them, and at last they fled. Just as I caught the Princess Shekh Nabat I awoke from all the pleasures of my dream. Alas! where was I? lying where I fell,—in the mud, an unclean dog licking my face, while a swarm of flies were regaling themselves on the nectar of my lips. It was all a dream after all. I had been lying in the dirt all the time, instead of enjoying the good things which presented themselves to my imagination.' The story loses much even in this free trans-

lation; but it will give, I hope, an idea of the absurd fancies that come to the muddled brain of the opium-smoker.

The semi-liquid opium used in smoking is thus prepared. A large quantity of opium is put into a spacious earthenware pot and covered over with cold water; the pot is then put upon the fire and the contents boiled till they are thick and glutinous. When sufficiently boiled it is carefully strained, the dregs pitched away, and the preparation, now called *Chandu* or *Kimám*, dished for use. The pot in which it is prepared becomes, during the boiling, thoroughly impregnated with the intoxicating qualities of the drug, hence it is too precious to pitch away; sufficient power to intoxicate may still be got from it. To get it they put a little cold water in the vessel and wash it well. The water absorbs whatever is left, and becomes a powerful intoxicant. It would, however, be inconvenient to keep the liquid, or, perhaps, it would get bad before they could use it; to avoid this inconvenience and possibility of loss, cotton cloth is dipped in it till the whole is absorbed. A few minutes in the sun suffices to dry it, after which it is folded up and put away till required. When it is called for, a portion is torn off and washed in a cup of water, to which, by the process, is imparted all the intoxicating powers of the opium. This they call *Kafa*. Chandu is not always smoked alone. It is used to form the basis of another intoxicant known as *Madak*. This is considered a very choice preparation. It is composed of *pán*, finely ground on a stone, attar of roses, thick boiled milk, or other ingredients, mixed with *Chandu*. It may be superfluous to say that they suffer greatly from the use of all the preparations. I was once asked to call upon a Mahometan gentleman who was suffering from an extraordinary disease, one, I was informed, which had defied the skill of the Yuáni* doctors. I had never seen anything like it,

* Greek doctors. They still practise the Greek system of medicine.

and was at a loss to imagine what it could be. He looked strong and healthy, but every three or five minutes his features underwent the most ridiculous contortions, which were accompanied by a succession of short but rapid snorts, exactly like the sound emitted by an engine starting a heavy train on a foggy day, when the rails are so greasy that the wheels run round without any equivalent progress. It was painful to himself and all related to him. I concluded it was occasioned by the use of opium, and asked him if he indulged in the drug. He answered my question by producing a small box of pills each about the size of an ordinary scammony pill, and told me he took six or seven three times a day and had done so for some years. I suggested that perhaps the best cure would be to leave off the use of opium by reducing the quantity gradually. This seemed a new idea, but one which, when once suggested, commended itself to him. He took my advice; curtailed the amount daily, meanwhile taking a powder which had been prepared for him. The result was most gratifying. The paroxysms decreased in severity while the interval between them became longer and longer, till at last, having abandoned the use of the drug altogether, he enjoyed complete immunity from his painful and distressing complaint.

It falls to a missionary's lot, among his other duties, to use what little knowledge he may have of medicine to alleviate the bodily ailments of the people among whom he is called to labour. This circumstance brought me into contact with a large number of women who were otherwise in strict seclusion, and nothing pained me more than to find that many of them were addicted to this vice. They fly to it in their troubles as, unfortunately, too many of their European sisters fly to drink, the panacea, as they fondly imagine, of

> 'The heart ache, and the thousand natural shocks
> That flesh is heir to,'

and stubbornly maintain their opinion that while it does them no harm they derive a vast amount of benefit from its use. The Ramzán fast is, I believe, greatly to blame for its use among the more respectable class of Mahometan women. Those who know anything of Mahometanism as a system are aware that the fast is kept up for forty days. In India it is enforced merely by public opinion, but such is its tyranny that few dare neglect it. During these forty days, while the thermometer stands at 96° in European houses, closed all round and kept cool by the constant action of the punkah and the damp *kaskas*, these poor wretches rigorously abstain from every refreshment. Not a morsel of bread, not a drop of water is allowed to cross their lips from sunrise to sunset. The agony is intense; and many succumb to its severity long before the fast is finished, while all are exceedingly stupid and dreamy. The folly of this practice will be evident when it is stated that from sunset to sunrise they eat and drink, turn night into day, and generally reverse the order of things. They maintain a rigorous fast by day, enjoy a sumptuous repast by night, and thus compensate for the sufferings they have endured, besides fortifying themselves against the long oppressive to-morrow. Few are exempted, while many who might be, prefer to endure the torture for the sake of the accruing merit. Among these must be included the great majority of women. I well remember one I had occasion to see frequently during the fast; she could hardly stand, she was so exhausted and emaciated by disease, yet when I ventured to suggest that under the circumstances she ought to resume her ordinary mode of life she replied, 'There will be no need to do that. I take opium freely before sunrise, and, if you will give me liquid medicine, I shall be able to dilute it and thus refresh myself several times during the day. We are allowed to take medicine; it does not impair the merit of the fast.'

Though the Kurān forbids the use of intoxicating

liquors, and Mahometans for the most part follow its injunctions, still there are many, and their number is unfortunately increasing, who disregard every consideration to gratify their passion for brandy. These are not mostly, nor even generally, members of the lower grades of society, but men who have enjoyed all the advantages of a collegiate education and occupy positions of trust and responsibility. It would, of course, be absurd to charge their failing against their English education, except in so far as it breaks all their old world ideas to pieces, and introduces them into a sphere of intellectual activity and freedom. The first moments of a too hastily imparted or acquired freedom generally lead to excess in some direction; and among the Mahometans, as among the Hindus, it too often takes the form of drinking to excess. An English education starts their ideas off on the same lines as an Englishman's, and when they have got thus far, imitation is not difficult. They have taken to cricket, badminton, and tennis, somewhat clumsily, it is true; but they have made a beginning, and perhaps that is as much as ought fairly to be said of their imitation of our drinking customs. May it never become more!

On one occasion I had as my travelling companion on a railway journey a Mahometan gentleman of position, an ex-student, as I afterwards discovered, of the Mahometan College at Aligurh, who was so drunk as to be utterly incapable of taking care of himself. In one of the lunatic asylums of the Punjab I saw, some years ago, a Mahometan who had lost his reason through the excessive use of brandy. He had filled at different times excellent situations, but had sacrificed them one after the other to his new craving. Of course, two cases do not prove even a limited number of the people drunkards, any more than two stray swallows make a summer; nor do I wish to imply that they do; my only intention in quoting them is to show that the evil has begun; that a people long

noted for their sobriety have begun to worship the Moloch of the West.

While on the subject of intoxicants I may refer to the use of tobacco. By many good Mahometans the use of the weed is regarded as 'harám,' *i.e.*, forbidden; but on the whole they must be classed among the very large section of humanity labelled 'smokers.' At the present time there are very few Indian Mahometans who do not use the hukka, while many pay very high prices for the perfumed tobacco they love; indeed, I have heard of wealthy nawábs paying as much as from 80 to 120 rupees for 2 lb. The tobacco used in India is very differently prepared from that consumed in Europe; and the stranger fails to recognise in the dirty, brownish black mass any resemblance to bird's-eye, shag, cavendish, and the numerous fancy varieties that adorn the London tobacconist's shop-window. Repulsive as it appears, it is nevertheless superior to much of the tobacco imposed upon the English smoker under a variety of fancy names, for it has the merit of being composed of the true *Tabaci folia*. It is prepared thus: the dried leaf is beaten into a fine powder, sifted and put into a mortar, where it is mixed with coarse treacle till it forms a stiff paste. While in the mortar it is perfumed by the addition of camphor, attar of roses, jasmine, and various other ingredients. It is sold and smoked in this damp state.

It is, of course, impossible to light it with a match. The difficulty is overcome by placing a slow burning tablet of charcoal above the tobacco, which gradually dries and ignites. The preparation of these tablets is an industry by itself, and is, perhaps, exclusively in the hands of the Mahometans. It is extremely improbable that the Hindus will ever interfere with their monopoly, for it is not sufficiently profitable to tempt even the meanest capitalist. The wonder is that anyone succeeds in earning a livelihood by it. We hear much of the poverty of match-box makers,

but their case, I imagine, is even worse They have to collect the charcoal, pound it into a coarse powder, work it into a paste by the aid of thick rice water, prepare the tablets, and sell them at the rate of ten for a pice! One would be interested in knowing the margin of profit.

Chewing is not confined to Yankees; it is, perhaps, even more common among Hindustánis. When the tobacco mass is ready they make up tiny pills which are sold at the rate of from ten to thirty-two rupees per *seer*,* or in small boxes at from four annas to two rupees, according to the quality of the tobacco. These are consumed only by the rich; the poor chew a very much commoner article. It is simply a powder composed of dry pulverized tobacco, mixed with a certain proportion of lime; but this, repulsive as it appears, affords them every gratification.

* Two pounds.

CHAPTER III.

Women—Rouge—Polygamy—The Maulvi and his English Wife—A Deceived Wife—Female Inferiority—'Not at home to Gentlemen'—Zenana Life demoralizing—How an Anglicized Mahometan guarded his Wife—Prison-like Homes—An irritated Polygamist—Experience in a Hindu Zenana—Ministering Angels—Mahometan Sects—Religion in Daily Life—The Servant and the Poultry—The Lady and the Stewardess—Training a Child in the way he should go—No compromise with Idolatry—Fasting—The gorgeous East—Goat Sacrifice—Mahometan Clannishness—A meritorious Murder—A Mahometan Saint and Hero—Godliness without Cleanliness—Mahometan Houses—Hair-dyes—The Green Cat—A successful Dye—Red Hair—'English as she is wrote.'

THE women use menddhi* very plentifully, applying it to the palms of their hands, the soles of their feet, and the toe and finger nails; besides which they use collyrium to touch the eyelids and eyebrows, so as to give additional lustre to their black eyes. They are fond, too, of rouge, and I have seen the cheeks of a young Mahometan bride, who had never breathed any other atmosphere than that of the zenana, as highly coloured as if she had spent her days in unrestrained freedom on the mountains.

Poor creatures, who can blame them! For what is there to occupy their attention from day to day within the compass of four walls, but jewels, dress, appearance, and babies? We pity them at a distance, but when we know they accept their lot with cheerfulness, because ignorant of what they lose by their captivity, we pity them all the more. Yet, that they accept their lot cheerfully is undeniable, for they have

* *Lawsonia inermis.*

become used to it, and use is second nature. They think it immodest to be seen in public.

How long does it take to get used to their life of seclusion? Not very long. Several *English* ladies were carried into the zenanas of wealthy and well-to-do Mahometans during the mutiny, who have become so used to their life that they refuse to quit their seclusion. But perhaps in *these* cases a sense of degradation acts as powerfully as a love for the zenana, to keep them where they are.

Most Mahometans are polygamists. The system they profess sanctions polygamy and several other sexual relations, so that a Mahometan has no scruple in espousing a plurality of wives. This is all right when he marries Mahometan women; but, like other Hindustánis of the day, he frequently comes to England and takes to himself another wife from our English daughters. English ladies, beware! With very rare exceptions no *unwedded* Mahometan is ever met with in England, and when one of this community marries in this country, he generally contracts what *he* regards as a temporary marriage, a union which has the sanction of his religion. They do this when from home, and give the temporary wife a divorce on returning. Their own women understand the custom; English women do *not*, and commit a mistake in marrying them, which is more frequently than not followed by painful and humiliating results. I speak from cases coming within my knowledge, and information I have received from Mahometans themselves. Let me give one or two.

Several years ago one of them came to England to teach Arabic. While living in England he made the acquaintance of a lady who, charmed by his manner (for Mahometans have a great deal of *suaviter in modo*), encouraged his attentions, and responded in all good faith to his proposals. They were united in matrimony; she of course believing herself to be his lawfully wedded wife. Several years passed away,

when at length the husband left our shores, ostensibly to revisit his native land, in reality to forsake his English wife and rejoin those whom he had left behind him in India. As he did not return she became uneasy; all the more so, that while her letters were not returned to her, she received no answer to them. In a fatal moment she resolved to go to him; left her home and sailed eastward; but when she reached his door, she was rudely repulsed and loaded with the most vituperative abuse. What was she to do? Alone; friendless; despised; forsaken; penniless, in a strange land—what a position! Smarting under the cruel wrong inflicted upon her, she sought the aid of the authorities. They were helpless; for, being a Mahometan, he could not be charged with bigamy; and it being, according to *his* view, only a temporary marriage, she had no permanent claim upon him.

Do you ask what became of her? Perhaps the veil had better not be lifted too far. Driven to desperation, she sought refuge in drink. Shame kept her from returning to her native land. Lost at length in the labyrinths of an Eastern city, she fell a prey to the worst of all vices, and died a few years ago an outcast from pure society. If ever *requiescat in pace* deserved to be said of anyone, it ought to be of one so deeply injured, so falsely betrayed.

In 1880-81 I was in charge of the Medical Mission in Delhi, and had to arrange for its conduct during the absence of the doctor on leave. Being in need of a qualified native doctor to manage it, I advertised for one. The day following the appearance of the advertisement, a very dark man rushed into my room in a great state of excitement and applied for the vacant post. To my astonishment he introduced himself as Dr. D——, M.R.C.S., etc., etc., London. I replied that I could not afford one with his qualifications, even if I found his representations to be true and his character satisfactory. But he was not to be

put off. He would do anything, and take anything, however humble, as a makeshift. His earnestness attracted me, and finding me interested he poured into my ear the following account of himself.

He was a compounder in one of the military hospitals for several years, and while serving in that capacity conceived the idea of taking his degree in medicine in England. By strict economy he saved a little money, which he transferred to this country, and followed it as an extra steward on board one of the P. and O. steamers. In England he was received everywhere, and soon found himself moving in good society and courted by everybody. During his residence he made the acquaintance of a lady whom he made his wife before returning home. On reaching India he found a large army serving in Afghanistan, and secured an acting appointment. But war, like everything else, comes to an end in time. The Gladstonian Government came into power; the army was recalled; and his services being no longer required he received his discharge. The story seemed improbable, but I continued to listen. His means were soon exhausted; he was without a home, wandering hither and thither with his wife in quest of employment. Her state was pitiable. About to become a mother, she had no home in which to rest, nor money to buy necessaries for the coming stranger. All my sympathy went out to her, although I had never seen her, my indignation against her husband keeping exact proportion. Something had to be done, and I invited him to bring her over to dinner. Never shall I forget the ladylike woman who was sharing his fortunes. His story was only too true. Alone with an English sister she poured out the recital of her wrongs; and sad wrongs they were. He had gone to England and played *le grand seigneur*, and easily found people who took him at his own valuation; among them his unfortunate wife, who had been cruelly deceived by his pretensions. She married

under the impression that she was making a brilliant match; she reached India to find her hopes

'Vanish like the baseless fabric of a dream ;'

him, whom she trusted, a deceiver; herself a deceived, homeless wife.

All Thackeray's sarcasm has not yet taught Englishmen and women that every Indian is not a 'nabob.' There are people still living as foolish as the Newcomes, who take the uncorroborated word of a household menial, when he ventures to pass himself off as a prince in this country.

Mahometans are firm believers in the inferiority and infirmity of women. They have no respect for the sex, mourn their birth, and take every conceivable precaution to keep them out of sight while they live. This idea becomes amusing when they think English womanhood requires to be equally guarded.

A friend of ours took to himself a bride from England. In India the 'Station' call on brides, and offer their felicitations while making her acquaintance. Several days after her arrival we called upon the newly-wedded couple. The house appeared quiet, and in answer to our summons an old Mahometan servant of the bridegroom's hurried out and salaamed. We offered our cards, which he took with perfect politeness; but informed us they had gone out for a drive. When they returned the call, they expressed their regret that we left before the servant brought in the cards.

'Why,' we replied, 'the bearer told us you had gone for a drive.'

'My husband had gone out on business,' answered the bride, 'but I was at home, and wondered why you left as soon as you gave the servant your cards.'

Several days subsequently I met the bridegroom, who, brimming over with mirth, told me that on returning home he questioned the man as to his reply to us.

With delicious naïveté he answered, 'I said you had both gone for a drive.'

'But why?' urged the husband; 'you knew your mistress was at home.'

'Certainly I did, sir; but then a *gentleman* called as well as a lady, and I did not think you would like your wife to see gentlemen as well as ladies!'

The high-caste Hindus also keep their women in seclusion; but with them the zenana system is an importation, adopted in self-defence subsequently to the establishment of Mahometan supremacy in India. It is a Mahometan institution, and more than anything else reflects on the moral conceptions as well as the actual conduct of the followers of the Prophet.

Life under such conditions must necessarily be monotonous and demoralizing, but if we can believe the sex that enjoys the free air of heaven and the pleasures of unrestrained social intercourse, the women are parties to the arrangement by which their husbands, fathers, and brothers become their gaolers. If this is true, they must have fallen very low indeed, and exemplify in their persons the degrading, unholy influences of a religion that settles down like a moral blight on every land to which it penetrates.

Of course there are zenanas *and* zenanas. It would be unjust to class them together; but where is the liberal, Anglicized Mahometan to be found? and when found, how is his zenana regulated? I have met several; I have discussed the question with them; but while they clamour for increased political freedom, they refuse to abate one whit from the whole-heart submission they exact from the weaker sex. In political questions it might be well to take this into account; for surely no class of men who treat women as the Muslims do, are fit to enjoy any large measure of political power.* I was in the habit of calling weekly

* Readers must not think I refer to the National Congress demands, for it has a social as well as a political side, and the members are earnestly striving to brighten the lot of women in general, and widows

upon one of the advanced class, and was always received in a small room that communicated with the female apartments. This much I learned during my earlier visits; but I had no idea of the number of interposing barriers, till one day, contrasting the freedom enjoyed by English ladies with the imprisonment of Muslim women, a subject on which we invariably took opposite sides, he informed me that so rigorously did he insist upon the national custom, that there was a series of doors between his audience room and the apartments occupied by his wife, so arranged that it was impossible for the faintest whisper of a male voice to find its way to her ears! This was an Anglicized Mahometan!

On one occasion my wife went to visit the family of a Mahometan nobleman who mourned the paternity of several daughters, all of whom, however, were engaged to be married to the princes of a royal house enjoying the luxury of banishment and Government surveillance in the neighbourhood of Calcutta. The daughters met her covered with gems and—dirt, though rich and occupying one of the most stately residences in the city. The family mansion was not only stately; it stood high, and commanded a magnificent prospect of the city. They suggested that my wife should go on the housetop and see it; but no one offered to accompany her. Naturally she wished to know their reason for allowing her to go alone. With the naïveté of women who have never known freedom they replied; 'We never go up without orders; and we never get the order, except it is dark!'

Where the house is well enclosed the women are allowed the use of the courtyard: but even this slight concession is attended with danger. On one occasion I found myself the innocent cause of irritation. We

in particular. They may be listened to with respect, as calmly expressing the needs of their native land. They have my fullest sympathy and support. The question affects Anglo-Indians as much as natives, for they have no voice in political affairs.

were extending our work in the city of Benares, and I hired a flat-roofed, substantial house overlooking the ghāts and some part of the town. On the first day of our occupancy I stood for some time by the parapet enjoying the panorama that spread out before me, little thinking that while I was gratifying myself I was causing others pain. But this I had actually been doing; for I was shortly afterwards waited upon by an indignant Mahometan, who told me I had been overlooking his zenana, and that the terrified ladies had to forego the pleasures of the courtyard. Poor creatures! I was all unconscious of their existence; but I learned afterwards that my neighbour was the *unhappy* possessor of no less than three wives, all of whom objected as much to being looked at as they disliked each other's company. I am convinced this was after all only the statement of a jealous husband, not the feeling of the women themselves. I reach this conclusion from their behaviour when freed from the controlling influence of their male relations. While in charge of the Medical Mission in Delhi I came officially in contact with about a dozen of them daily. Closely veiled, with only two bright eyes shining out through the perforations in their *burkas*, they would steal in quietly as shadows and take their seats; but when their turn came to be attended to, the veil was lifted, and while no one could see them from behind, they stood face to face with the attendant and answered his questions without reserve.

When male relations are present they are different beings. Then they evidently think more of consequences than of their personal feelings. The efforts they make to secure privacy are extremely absurd.

I was asked by a Hindu, occuping a good position in the Station Staff Office of a town in which I was stationed, to see his wife, who was ill. When I reached the house the male members were busy at their morning worship of the household gods. The whole house was filled with dense clouds of incense,

and I was obliged to endure it till all was arranged upstairs. The preparations for my reception had been delayed till the last moment, and as I arrived before they were complete, the worship was prolonged till I began to get weary. Rising at length, one of the semi-nude worshippers went to inquire whether I might with safety be asked to ascend. All was ready, and he returned to lead the way.

At the top of a flight of stairs we entered a long room like a dormitory. What was my surprise to see a line of beds from one end to the other, and on each a figure wrapped up like a corpse and reclining as stiffly as a knightly statue in a parish church. We passed them one by one till we came to the last bed. Stopping, my guide said, 'Here is the patient.' A hand somewhat shrivelled and not too clean came from under the coverlet; but not a word was spoken. I was expected to feel the pulse, tell the disease and prescribe the medicine without seeing the patient or hearing a word from her lips. The farce was getting too much for me, so I addressed the husband, and drew from him a description of the complaint, in her hearing. The stratagem answered excellently. He did not describe it to her satisfaction, for soon a muffled voice chimed in. The ice was broken. We attempted to converse; but not very successfully. At length the farce got too much for the patient also; for starting up, she cast the covering aside and looked me full in the face without any indication of outraged modesty.

Experiences like these might be prolonged *ad infinitum*, but for this there is no need. An illustration speaks volumes, and what has been said will give English readers *some* idea of what the zenana system means.

The mention of this system affords me an opportunity of paying a passing tribute to the English ladies, who, as zenana teachers and lady doctors, are doing so much to enlighten the minds of the enslaved and to alleviate sufferings that are never witnessed by

the outside world. *They* are the sunbeams that pierce through the barriers from the bright world without to illuminate the prevailing darkness within. No wonder they are so eagerly welcomed—certainly they deserve to be; no wonder they are so successful in inspiring confidence and compelling love, for in this grand work they are, in the most literal sense, ministering angels. Their work is bound to be effective. Where men are obliged to work through the intellect, for a conscience has to be created in India, they are quietly working on the heart and storming the affections. They are winning the women, and when *they* are won the unborn generations are already conquered, and English missionary campaigns in India are at an end.

I have already remarked that Mahometans are religious in their way. It is needful to say this, because most people who know them only at a distance think them very religious in *our* sense of the word, and laud them for their fearless observance of times and seasons of prayer. Those who think thus generally imagine, too, that they all believe the same thing and worship together in the same mosque. I am sorry if the truth compels me to demolish anybody's pleasant theories; but the fact is Christians are not the only people who have divisions and sub-divisions. The Mahometan world can dispute supremacy with an easy grace.

There are three great sections: Suni, Shia, Wahābi.*

These have their sub-divisions. The great Suni sect claims to be the orthodox party. It is divided into five different camps: Hanafi, Shafi, Malaki, Hambali, and Sufi.

How do they differ?

The Hanafi differ from the others in holding that in ablution before prayer, the arms ought to be washed to within three fingers' breadth of the elbow; the Shafi Malaki, and Hambali maintain a contrary opinion.

It is their belief that the arms ought to be washed

* Corresponding to the Roman Catholic, Greek, and Protestant Churches, the three great divisions of Christendom.

till three fingers breadth *above* the elbow! They also maintain that all things living in the waters are clean and fit for food. Here the Hanafi join issue with *them*, for they hold that only fish are fit for man to eat. They have some differences, too, as to the correct posture during prayer. In *one* thing they agree, and as far as I know, only in one,—that is, in the belief that Shiás are heretics and ought to be opposed by force.

The Sufis, the last of the five divisions, are subdivided into four parties: Kadariya, Chistiya, Nakshbandiya, and Saharwardiya. They are, perhaps, the most emotional of the various sects, and are passionately fond of dancing. It is an article of their creed that it forms part of the pastime of heaven, and consequently ought to be enjoyed here. It is indulged in, however, not merely for the physical enjoyment it affords, but for purposes of religion. They dance that they may have ecstatic visions and pass a brief interval of their earthly existence in realms of bliss.

When they are assembled, dancing girls, and men who personate women, enter the room and commence the slow, stupid motion of an Indian nāch. Every feeling is played upon, till, in a delirium of excitement, they rise one after the other, as moved, and join the hired performers, casting aside their garments to give greater play to their limbs. Intoxicated with delights they shout: 'Heaven! Oh, heaven! We are in heaven! We see God!'—and continue to dance till, exhausted with their efforts, they fall about like drunken men.

The Nakshbandiya are very fond of magic. I believe, too, they practise spiritualism; but unfortunately for the members of the sterner sex, those who practise it say that men cannot hold communications with their dead relations. That privilege is, according to them, reserved for women.

It is done in this way. The palm of the hand is covered with collyrium, and the dupe told to look steadily on it till a vast plain appears. When she gets

thus far, the rest is easy. Imagination now comes into play, and she is readily persuaded to believe that she actually beholds the person she longs to see, and mentally converses with the shades of the departed. No one else can see the vision nor hear what the spirit says. Should anyone want to qualify as a professor of the black science, he may do so by following these directions. He must not eat beef, mutton, nor fish. He must say, 'Azam to Allaikim ya masharab jin nāwalinse is tellang su'adan istatran fathun havivak,'* with a clear distinct Arabic pronunciation a hundred times each day he lives. When he has repeated it, his desires will be fulfilled: but yet only conditionally; for when he wishes to summon anyone he must burn incense till the room is filled with smoke, in addition to liberally anointing himself with otto of roses.

The Shias are divided into two sections: Rasuli and Ihbāri. The only difference between them is that the Ihbāri appoint someone to lead them in prayer. The Rasuli have no leader. They hold that *the* leader has still to come. The Sunis or 'orthodox' select one of their number to lead them in prayer. They follow him in action, but remain silent while he prays audibly. The Wahābis, the third division, select a leader but do not depend upon him. They all pray inaudibly, but together say 'Amen' aloud. The Hanafi, or first subdivision of the Sunis, hold this is wrong, and oppose the Wahābi practice in a very determined manner; indeed, so serious has the question become that the Suni and Shia forget their hostility while watching their bitter conflicts.

The Wahābis are the Mahometan Puritans. Fierce and fanatical, they are increasing in numbers, and may in time become dangerous factors in social and political problems. They believe in open warfare as well as in assassination, whether by the dagger or the poisoned cup. They are, perhaps, the only section that would readily proclaim a Jihād, or religious war, and consequently have to be closely watched. They will take

* This is a mystic formula and has no meaning, as far as I know.

the most solemn oath, but cannot be trusted to keep faith, and are as bitter enemies of the other sects of Mahometans as they are of Christians. They are not allowed to enter the mosques of the other sects, and are consequently obliged to have their own.

Fanaticism, however, is not peculiar to the Wahābi: every Mahometan is touched with it. No Mahometan ever apologises for his religion. Devoid of the critical faculty, or at least never exercising it upon his faith, he is ever steadfast and immovable. Their social life is tied up with the religious. They cannot be separated; and no Muslim ever thinks of neglecting religious duties, so strong is the force brought to bear upon him from without. In early morning, when nature begins to hail the approach of the rising sun, the clear, sonorous tones of the muezzin's call to prayers—'Allāh akbār'—rings over the city, re-echoed from a hundred minars. At the various hours of prayer throughout the day, his cry pierces the din of traffic, rises higher than its clamour, and summons the faithful to prayer. Like true formalists, they kneel down where they may happen to be, in careless indifference to their surroundings, and, as Dr. Buckley aptly remarks, 'perform their prayers.' They are never absorbed by their devotions. They can look about as much as they like; the one thing to which they object while thus engaged, is to anyone passing in front of them, lest they should unwittingly bow to their fellow mortal, and become idolaters.

I had a Mahometan servant whose duty it was to care for the poultry. He was a most devout man from a Mahometan point of view, and never failed to say his prayers at sunset while driving in the fowls, in tones so loud that the whole neighbourhood had the advantage of them. There was no pretence at devotion; for as he ran after the fowls you could hear him say, 'Allāh! Allāh!—you wretched fowl—Allāh!—you base-born wretch!—ūl rahmān—come back there—Allāh, Allāh, Allah—there now, my dear, go in,' and so on, with frequent variations.

But after all, I fear *we* cannot throw stones without danger to ourselves. I recollect a young lady on board ship, delicate, refined, and religious, ostentatiously so, as far as times, seasons, and postures were concerned. One morning she mislaid some article of attire, and was too indolent to look for it. It was so much easier to raise her voice or climb stairs in search of the stewardess. Failing to find her, she returned to her cabin and engaged in her devotions with what seemed to her hushed cabin companions earnestness of spirit. Meanwhile the stewardess found time to attend her, but finding her engaged in prayer, was about to retreat. She looked up, however, though still on her knees, gave her orders, and resumed after the brief interlude during which worldly things demanded a share of her attention. Perhaps she was not peculiar after all; and if not, while laughing at Mahometan formalism we may be condemning ourselves.

From earliest childhood every Mahometan who aspires after knowledge is taught the Kurān,* nor is he allowed to study any secular subject whatever till he has mastered it in Arabic. They memorize it from beginning to end. Men called Hāfiz, with good memories, repeat it *yearly* during the Ramzān festival. Night after night they assemble in the mosques, and in presence of umpires the competitors recite it from beginning to end. Prizes are awarded according to merit; and in this way some earn sufficient money to maintain them throughout the year, without indulging in the luxury of honest labour.

Everything possible is done by Mahometans to saturate the minds of their children with the doctrines of Mahometanism, and to keep alive the vividness of every impression from year to year. For this reason it is very much more difficult to work among Mahometans than any other class.

The Mahometan is a bitter opponent of idolatry; indeed, his religion is a protest against it. He is a

* The Mahometan scriptures.

thorough-going iconoclast, when he has power to work his will; but in India this is curbed by the strong hand of a strong Government.

He is not allowed to make the *image* of anything; but where the love of sculpture and painting is restrained in one direction, the love of the beautiful and fanciful finds an outlet in other directions. He may not carve nor set up an *image*, but he cultivates the most delicate tracery of roses and other flowers in the marble of his palaces, or works them out in flashing clusters of gems. He may not paint the most innocent device on the inner walls of his place of worship, but he illuminates the outside with extracts from the Kurān in the most dazzling letters. It is a system of compromises and compensations, without which Mahometanism would be the most dreary, mentally depressing system ever known among men.

Their festivities they keep as the Jews kept theirs. They are national occasions. Everybody joins and shares in the festivity or restraint.

The Ramzān fast occurs during the hottest part of the year, and lasts for forty days. Very few are exempt from its observance; but it must not be thought that it is a fast as we understand fasting. They abstain from both food and water from sunrise to sunset, but from sunset till sunrise they may eat and drink to satiety; in fact, they only reverse the ordinary course of nature by turning night into day. *The* privation must be the want of water when the heat is so oppressive. Needless to say, it is not to spiritual profit; for a more disagreeable set of people while the fast lasts cannot well be imagined.

At the expiration of the fast they array themselves in their finest and gayest apparel, and prepare for the bakri'id, or goat festival. What a brilliant, animated appearance the streets present! Their dress is of every possible hue—white, red, blue, scarlet, crimson, purple, etc., while their caps, made of tinsel, sparkle and glitter in the dazzling sunshine. Here is a rough note made in the street, with the scene passing around

me: 'Little boys in red silk pantaloons, through which there runs a golden stripe; white robe and cap glittering with golden tinsel; others with coat of many colours—yellow, red, pink and blue lines. The umbrellas defy description. Here is one—maroon with a band of golden embroidery about two inches deep; others, blue, green, black, white, yellow, mauve, pink, and even a "Dolly Varden."' As they pass, it is seen that one in each group carries a small black kid. These are intended for sacrifice. Mahometans always take life by cutting the throat, and as they slay the victim they say, 'Its blood for my blood, its flesh for my flesh, its bone for my bone.' The grand finale is the gathering in the musjids. On one occasion I was invited to witness the scene from the Emperor's balcony in the Jama Musjid in Delhi. The mosque has praying stones for, I have heard, 25,000 worshippers, and on this occasion about two-thirds were occupied. The congregation moved like a regiment of soldiers, and the rustle of their well-starched garments sounded like the rumble of distant thunder, as they went through the various postures of worship. Not a voice was heard but that of the leader, who, at the end of every prayer, shouted 'Allāh akbār.'*

After this ceremony, life resumes its usual tenor till the Moharram, when the Shiās work themselves up to a dangerous pitch of excitement. This festival I need not describe, as it is so well known: my purpose is to limit my descriptions to habits and customs which have escaped observation or been but insufficiently noticed.

Mahometans are generally true to each other, especially in cases of differences with Hindus or Christians; indeed, they never go against a co-religionist in such cases. Though they may dislike each other personally, they will shelve personal dislike to help a Mussulman. A Mahometan, now deceased, told me that his uncle, on one occasion, sent his chaprāssi, or messenger, out to his estate to inquire into some trouble with one of the tenant-farmers. The latter becoming imperti-

* God is great.

nent, the chaprāssi struck him with his loaded stick and killed him. He was arrested and sent up for trial. Everything appeared to be against him, for some of the other tenants had seen him strike the blow. A plea was put in for the defence that he could not be guilty of the murder, since, on the day in question, he never left Benares. It was put to the proof, and everything in India has to be decided upon the volume of the evidence. The Mahometans, well aware of this weakness of European law, gathered up, not merely in numbers, but influence, and stated on oath that the accused never left the city, and consequently could *not* have killed the murdered man. Among them was my informant—a man of position, wealth, and influence, whose word was far more potent in a court of law than that of a crowd of rustics. Yet he *knew* the chaprāssi had committed the deed, and when I charged him with perjury, and being accessory after the fact he readily replied, 'That is quite true; but then, why throw good blood after bad? By taking another life you cannot restore that which has been taken; besides he was only a Hindu.'

The culprit was discharged; and, for aught I know may still be living and prospering, besides rejoicing that he has rid the world of an infidel.

This latter exploit is one which, in religious wars, merits Paradise, and accounts for the fierce fanaticism of the Ghāzis when our troops have met them in deadly conflict in Afghanistan. They have a whole calendar of saints, and a martyrology of their own, for many have sacrificed their lives to the cause, lured on by the promise of a sensualist's Paradise in reward for present sacrifice. Measured by our moral standard, they would be found lamentably wanting; but then, no Mahometan measures his corn by our bushel: they come up to *his* standard, and we have no right to object. We must be content to take them as they are; for religion and morality have no necessary connection in their system. The life of one may suffice as a pretty fair sample of the others.

His story takes us to the city of Benares before the country passed under the dominion of the Moghul Emperors. There lived and reigned at that distant date a king named Banar, who was a bigoted Hindu and a violent persecutor of the few Mahometans living in his city. All powerful in his own territory, he made it a practice to offer the blood of a Mahometan daily on the altar of his god, an expedient by which he supposed he could rid himself of hated subjects,

A TYPICAL MAHOMETAN.

and, at the same time, allay the anger of his god—certainly one by which he effectually roused the ire of the Mahometans, led up to his own death and the overthrow of his dynasty. The story of his ruthless butchery reached Delhi, and was listened to in speechless amazement by a fanatic named Ghāzī Mía, who swore a terrible oath of vengeance. Allying with himself several men of like temperament, he set

out on his bold expedition, which had for its object no less a purpose than the chastisement of a king who had the command of an army.

When they reached Benares they learned that the victim chosen for the following day was the son of a widow. Going to her, Ghāzī Mía said he wished to take her son's place on the morrow. The woman, afraid of consequences, refused to comply, on which the redoubtable champion of Islam and the oppressed, together with his companions, marched to the fort and demanded an audience of the king. They were met by a flat refusal. The guards refused to allow them to pass. Drawing their swords, they made a way for themselves, cutting down and slaying all who opposed them. The noise of the fray reached the ears of Rájá Banar, who hurried out to inquire into a circumstance so unusual. On emerging, he stood face to face with Ghāzī Mía, who asked him whether it was true, as reported, that his god required the blood of a Mahometan daily. 'Yes,' said the king.

'Can you prove it?' asked Ghāzī Mía.

'Certainly.'

'Then let us go to the temple and inquire.'

They both entered and stood in the presence of the idol.

'Do you require the blood of a Mahometan daily?' demanded Ghāzī Mía.

'Oh no!' exclaimed the god, trembling all over, 'the king gives it of his own accord.'

The answer was damnatory. Turning round, he smote the king, so that he died, smashed the hideous, bloodthirsty idol, and put the garrison to the sword.

Such is the story *as told to me by a Mahometan.* I never had the pleasure of hearing the Hindu version. Perhaps they accept the same account, for they both join in a festival held in his honour.

The hero married the daughter of a Hindu oil-seller, and then set out to conquer the enemies of Islam all along the North of India. In battle near

Bachraich he fell mortally wounded, but such was his fame, that from that time to this the memory of his first exploit has been commemorated annually by both Hindus and Mahometans. On each occasion they go through the marriage ceremony. A flag does duty for the hero, while a young girl, daughter of an oil-seller, has the honour of being espoused by it!

The Mahometan is easily distinguished from the Hindu both by his carriage and physiognomy; for Mahometanism appears to develop a type of features peculiar to those who profess it. His habits, too, are peculiar. In his own way he is religious, but he is not clean. I know *no* people, not even the aboriginal tribes I have come in contact with, who are so utterly indifferent to personal and domestic cleanliness. My recollections of their houses are distinctly unfavourable; and I say this, not of the houses of the poor, but of the affluent as well. For reasons that will be obvious, I suppress the names of those to whom I refer while inspecting, thus publicly, the houses they inhabit. The first is in Delhi. We pass down a narrow lane with high windowless walls on either side, down which the sewage flows into the festering, disease-propagating ditch beneath; for Mahometan houses are devoid of sanitary appliances and drain connections. We halt before a small door opening into an L-shaped passage, that communicates with a square court-yard around which the dwelling-rooms are ranged. On three sides there is a veranda, cut up into small sitting-rooms protected by ample curtains, while on the other side is the dwelling-house proper.

At the outer door we halt till the ancient door-keeper arranges for the privacy of the ladies. When they have secured a position from which they may see without being seen, we are conducted over the court-yard into one of the small veranda rooms, where we are received by the gentlemen of the house. It is simply furnished; indeed, it contains only two large wooden platforms on which small carpets are

spread. On these the native squats cross-legged with all the ease and comfort of one accustomed to this method of sitting; the European feels it very awkward and becomes painfully conscious that his legs require to be educated to the seat. The walls are bespattered all over with what looks like faded red ink. What is it? We need only look at the mouths of the natives to discover its origin. Constantly chewing *pān* they have got into the vile habit of spitting out the juice with the same indifference to surroundings as the tobacco-chewing American. Let us visit another. This is even dirtier than the last. The arrangement of the room is different. The floor is covered with a large thick Persian rug, upon which the owner reclines, supported at the shoulders by a large pillow-shaped cushion, not unlike a sack of wool. The case is of American cotton, and was once white; now it is so offensively dirty, we hesitate to come in contact with it.

These are samples of *good* houses, the residences of men of means; the poorer houses are, of course, infinitely worse. They must be imagined, for it would be almost offensive to refined taste to have them described.

It is impossible to visit a Mahometan of the orthodox school who is getting on in years without being struck by the colour of his hair. It is always a dull, brick red, an effect produced by the application of menddhi (*Lawsonia inermis*), a plant from the leaves of which a red dye is prepared. They are very partial to the colour; using it to dye not only the hair and beard when turning grey, but also the palms of the hands, the soles of the feet, and the toe and finger nails. It is used by both sexes, and by every grade of society. The practice of dyeing has given rise to many amusing and laughable experiences. Witness the following:

In the South of India there was a certain princess whose hair had begun to feel the bleaching effects of age. Wishing to renew her youth, and retain her

hold upon the affections of her lord, she determined to dye. Menddhi was out of favour in this instance, because its colour was a constant reminder that she was only fighting an unequal battle with decay. She resolved on the use of one of our European dyes, and applied to an English druggist for some preparation that would produce the desired effect. It reached her in due course; but she was too wise to be precipitate. True, she did not delay the application; but then she did not apply it to her own hair. Among her pets she had a beautiful white Persian cat, and commenced her amateur attempts at hair restoration upon it. The effect was all that could be desired from an artistic point of view, but it was one the princess could not look upon with unmixed feelings, nor congratulate herself too much upon having escaped. The unfortunate cat became a wonder to the animal creation—it turned pea-green.

The Government have a rule by which their servants are compulsorily retired at the age of fifty-five. Many of their native employés cannot tell their exact ages, and their ignorance frequently places them in a very awkward position. Age has to be judged by the appearance, and if a man should unfortunately turn prematurely grey, he is in danger of being placed on the retired list. Many are the methods adopted to avoid this issue. I select one.

I was sitting alone in the garden one hot night in May, 1884, when I received a visit from a gentleman occupying a good position under Government. His pay was high, his perquisites vastly higher; but he was in danger of being retired upon a pension that was only an insignificant fraction of his salary. The danger arose, not from any want of capacity or negligence on his part, but from the fading lustre of his black hair. Dangerous whispers were heard. Rivals who hoped to secure his appointment began to attract the attention of his superior officer to the signs of decay, which even *he* could not deny. But he was not nearly fifty-

five, and must take steps to bring his appearance into harmony with his real age. He had come to solicit my help. Could I give him a recipe for a hair-dye? I admitted my ignorance, but told him I possessed a copy of Besley's 'Druggist's Receipt Book,' which contained several recipes of the kind he desired, an announcement he hailed with delight. Would I write one? Of course I readily assented, and passed it over with the warning that I could not hold myself responsible for consequences; that in applying it, he did so at his own risk. I did what most others would have done under like circumstances—wrote out the first on the list; but with what excellent results!

A year elapsed; and as he had been absent from the city, we had not had an opportunity of meeting, nor had I had an opportunity of seeing the effect of the hair-dye. It came at last. A grandson was born to him, and in honour of the event he gave a grand entertainment to his friends. I was the only European honoured with an invitation. On my arrival at the house, I was ushered into a room lit up with innumerable lamps. The floor was covered with a clean white drugget, but there was only one chair in the room. To this I was escorted. When seated, the company squatted around, my host immediately in front of me. His behaviour was singular. All the time he kept pushing his fingers through his hair and smoothing his bushy black beard. At last he said:

'Do you know me?'

'Yes,' I replied, not seeing the cause of his query.

'Are you *quite* sure you do?'

'Certain.'

'Well, who am I?'

I gave him his name and official designation, enough to satisfy most men that I really knew to whom I was speaking; but it did not satisfy him.

'Do you see any change in me?'

'No,' I replied, 'not much.'

'But,' and here he attended to his beard and hair

more vigorously than ever, 'do you see *no* change in me?'

'Not much,' I again replied.

Finding me insensible to the change of which he was himself so conscious, for I had forgotten the recipe, he recalled the visit and subject of conversation twelve months before, and drew my attention to the striking effect the dye had produced. Not a grey hair was to be seen. Head and beard were jet black. He had the appearance of a man of forty, and all suggestions as to retirement had been silenced by the change effected!

The old isolation of Indian life is fast disappearing before the necessities of the nineteenth century. The Hindustāni now visits England to study law and medicine; native troops fight our battles in Africa, and grace the pageants of royalty in England. This leads them into situations in which they are unable to obtain what they regard as luxuries; menddhi among others. Unable to obtain it, they are obliged to regard the deepening white of approaching age with whatever stoicism they can command. Some years ago, a friend of mine, whose hair approaches perilously near the popular colour of India, was sailing down the Red Sea on board an outward bound steamer, that had called *en route* at Suez to pick up several of the late Khedive's horses, purchased by the Government of India for stud purposes. The authorities, instead of engaging Egyptian grooms to bring them over, sent several men and a non-commissioned officer from the detachment of Bombay cavalry stationed at Aden. The N.C.O. was getting on in years; the grey was plentifully mixed with the black, a state of things he was obliged to endure, but could not appreciate, for he had been separated from the refinements of India for nearly a year. My friend and he conversed together daily, always in Hindustāni, and for the most part understood each other. But a day came at last, when, emboldened by their intercourse, the N.C.O.

asked a favour, and in doing so used a word his fellow-traveller did not understand. Anxious to oblige, however, he called a gentleman more familiar with the language than himself, and asked him to translate the puzzling expression. The soldier's request was received with a hearty peal of laughter by those standing around. Turning to my friend, the translator said: 'He is under the impression you are an old man from the colour of your hair, and wishes to know whether you will oblige him with some of the dye you use with so much success!'

I have mentioned the invitation I received to attend the entertainment given on the birth of a son. It may not be out of place to close this chapter with the copy of an invitation to a wedding, as well as to give other specimens of native compositions in English. The following speaks for itself; I merely alter names to prevent recognition:

'*The J. L. Edwards, Esquire, and Company, Bombay.*

'HONOURED AND RESPECTED SIR,—I most humbly and respectfully beg to inform your high honour that there is marriage of my grandson, Durga Sing, with the daughter of the Baboo of ——, who is of the royal family of the Rajah of the same place. I will understand it my good luck if your honour will favour me with your coming to go to ——, and to be as one of the greatest Leader of mine. I hope your kindness and love towards me and my family will never deny in coming to us for the purpose of participating the pleasure of our company which is to be held in the mentioned place.

'We remain, sir,

'Your most humble Servants,

'——'

Of course, it must not be supposed all invitations are like this. I have had them lithographed in gold, in

purest English, their only fault being that they seemed to ape Anglican manners too closely.

Here is another composition on a very different subject, emanating, by-the-bye, from the master of a normal school:

'Dated F'abad, 13.2.85.

'SIR,—I have got some disease, therefore please write me its price per bottle, including postage. Please send the letter by the following address.

'——,

'Normal School.'

While in Delhi I received the following from a village some four miles distant from the city:

'SIR,—Will you step over five minutes and see two siks. One hath hot in his body, the other hath green eyes by reason of his inner sikness.

'I am, Your humble Servant,

'——'

Not long ago an enterprising firm of natives set up an ice factory. They sent out a sample to the European residents, with this advertisement:

'SIR,—I herewith beg to send you two seers of ice; but as this ice is only our first trial trip so it is not to perfection.

'Yours faithfully,

'——,

'Manager, Ice Company.'

The English on signboards is no less amusing. Here is one to exercise ingenuity on:

Dd Bkx Mkr

To help readers to decipher it, I had better say it

was over the station undertaker's door, and meant 'dead box maker'!

The English on the sign-boards in that bāzār was decidedly peculiar, but I can only give one more illustration, that of the baker's, who styled himself 'European loafer.'

The begging petitions are curiosities of literature; but how anyone can be imposed upon by them is a mystery. I have met two like the following:

'*To the Charitable Gentlemen and Ladies.*

'The humble petitioner is a native of Bombay. He left his own country to make pilgrimage to Kashi. On the way thieves stole his property, and now he is in a strange country, with his four brothers and five sisters, without money. His sisters have no tongues nor feet; the brothers have no eyes nor hands; and the poor petitioner, who has no tongue and cannot speak, is starving. Please, charitable gentlemen and ladies, help the poor petitioner, and I will ever pray, etc., etc.'

The missionaries meet a class of beggars and impostors none others come in contact with; or rather, I ought to say, since they change their tactics in dealing with the different classes, they try to impose upon missionaries by professing an interest in Christianity and desire for instruction. But missionaries are far too wary to be imposed upon easily. New-comers may be duped occasionally; but no one with any length of experience is caught by such glaring impostures as the following, brought me by a Mahometan:

'*To Rev. J. Ewen, Benares.*

'REV. SIR,—I most humbly beg to state that I am an inhabitant of East Bengal Dacca, and the son of one of the respectable fathers, who was the Zemindar of Bhowal, Burmie, and Salteah.

'But somehow or another, having lost my father's

estate, have been reduced to a most unspeakable sort of distress. And there are several other causes too, such as I have lost my wife, who died in Dacca on the 6th of October, 1878; have lost two boy sons also out of the number of three; have no employment nor any means whatever for my support from the year that my wife died. And besides these, wishing to become a Christian from many years, I could not because of a disagreeableness arising, and dispute and quarrel among our kinsfolk taking the land and properties, etc., of our predecessors; and hearing of my thinking of professing the Christianity, etc. Some of the members of our kindred have been following after me from place to place, and had persecuted me very much, and had given me much trouble; and have been taking away all my rights too by force, and in a riotous manner. Thus however getting much trouble by them, I was obliged to come and reside in Moorshedabad for many a year, where my two sons were laid under ground, and after that again when with my wife I had gone to my country to see the state of my country, and to be informed with the results of my enemies, etc.: during this time I have had induced my wife also to profess the Christianity, instructing her in many ways. She was agreed no doubt, and with much pleasure she was ready; but cannot say what was the will of God towards us that after her delivering another child there, when the child had become of ten or eleven months', she had departed to next life, and had caused my life to be hanged down and broke through much grief and sorrow because of her and the two children death who had died long before her: and had remained as a madman for few years, and under much difficulties and danger with this little or the youngest child, who by the grace of God has become now of seven years and is alive, and is with me here also.

'And again, desiring to see the tombs of those two sons who had died long before their mother, had come up to Moorshedabad and did stop there for a

year more. And on the 20th of March, 1885, a native gentleman of Lucknow, having engaged me as a private tutor to his sons, had taken me up there from Moorshedabad, on a salary of 15 rupees per month, besides my fooding and clothing, and promising to give for me and my child train hire as third class fare from Lucknow to Moorshedabad, when he would dismiss me. But instead of his doing so, he dealed with me very unjustly, owing to a very serious secret devilish tricks of his; he has been dismissing me without paying me my due wages, etc., and without fault. And was so much after me and against me, that wherever I use to take shelter in the house of any person, he used to teach his servants to go and instruct everyone not to keep me, mentioning this and that. At last I was obliged to come away from there, selling off my sitar (a kind of musical instrument), and my umbrella, etc., to this place Benares.

'And getting down ourselves here, have taken shelter in one of the Sarais over at Rajghat where I have to pay 2 annas a day for a room having occupied, besides our daily fooding expenses. However, I now do not know what arrangements to make for more expenses to be carried on with, and to pay the rent for our future more staying. I have now no more of anything to dispose off to be carried on with having no employment, nor any means for our support; and that as I am thinking of being converted to Christianity with my only one child as I have and nobody else, I do not know what to say.

'It is more than a month, I believe, that we have come down from Lucknow, and somehow or another selling off a few books and clothes I paid to the *Bhatiarah* for 20 days at the rate of 2 annas a day, rupees 2/8/-; and up to-day 13 days over passing, but cannot say what I shall do now.

'I do not care so much for getting to eat anything, and may perhaps be able to pass a couple of days or

so, if such would be the will of God towards us. He is gracious, and will supply me with something anyhow. But fearing very much to be insulted by the *Bhatiarahs* when I shall not be able to pay him on his making a request to me for the rent, and may perhaps be the loser of whatever I have at present with me belonging to me for the sake of a couple of rupees more being due to him on me.

'Further, if I think to take any other house anywhere on a cheaper rate of 1 or 2 rupees, then again I am thinking that before my occupying that I shall have to pay him one month in advance, and shall have to make an agreement paper and submit to him when I am not sure of my staying or not staying here without any hope at all. So unless I am settled somewhere steadily, my proposed intentions seems to me unavailing sort.

'If your honour therefore be good enough to admit of such a request of mine as to give me a place somewhere in your compound, or be pleased to give the rent of a house which I would take near your honour's Bungalow, or not very far from it to enable me to come to your honour to get some instructions from the Bible and be converted by your honour. And after that as it would be in my fate, so it may be. And as it may now come into your judgment, your honour may so take it for consideration.

'I am, sir,

'Your most obedient servant,

'MER HASAN ALI SHAH.'

I kept it as a curiosity, docketed with the handsome offer made me by a native doctor to become a Christian, with all his family and relations, some 20 or 30 persons in all, for the modest sum of 40 rupees, or, at the present rate of exchange, £2 8s.!

HINDUS.

CHAPTER IV.

Hinduism a Philosophic Religion—How a Hindu justifies Idolatry—Are Hindus Idolaters?—Brahmin and Sudra—The East awakening—Illusion—Great Thinkers—Adoption cannot change Character—Transmigration — Hindu Funerals — Cremation — The undefilable Ganges—Busy Ants—Wolfish Dogs—How the Municipality is Outwitted—Why are Bulls sacred?—Sacred and Profane: Mahadeo's Bulls in Dust-carts—A Run for Life—How the Sacred Cattle leave the Mahometan Slaughter-houses—Hindu Callousness to Suffering—The Crow that lost its Breakfast—Killed by a Snake—What Decides a Man's Caste?—The Heartlessness of Caste—Buried alive—Knocked down—How high-caste Policemen treat low-caste Women—Wonderful Escapes—A Perilous Race—European Kindness—A Degenerate Brahmin—Retribution—'May he be my Donkey!'

I LEFT what I had to say about the Mahometan religion as a system to the last. I must needs preface my experiences of the Hindus with a brief outline of their religion; for it will be impossible to understand much that follows, without at least a slight acquaintance with their beliefs.

Perhaps there is no subject less understood than the religion professed by the Hindus. Most people imagine they are idolaters pure and simple; they can see the outward manifestations of belief in gold, silver, brass, iron, stone, and clay, but it is a much more difficult thing to get behind all these grosser forms and study the spirit that reigns within. Hinduism is a well-reasoned philosophy. It is a calm, subtle pantheism, of which Spinoza's system is but a distant echo; and when we have reached the stage of

inquiry in which we can thus regard it, we see a well-ordered harmony instead of a mass of contradictions and absurdities. We can understand it only as we start from its own standpoint; for if we start along one of the many collateral branches into which it divides itself and work backwards, we are sure to miss its meaning,

Hinduism, then, starts from Brahm. Brahm is all, the only self-existent, and all else that is, is only the expression of Brahm. Readers will often have found their thoughts going back beyond the point in universal history when God created the heavens and the earth, and asking themselves in what state He, a pure Spirit, existed before the creation of the material universe. The Bible gives no hint: Hinduism, in the fearlessness of its speculations, says that before the creation of matter Brahm was like a man asleep. You look upon him in his repose, and see that the chest rises and falls; you touch him, and feel the pulsations that record the activity of the system. He lives, but does not act. He is endowed with all the attributes of manhood, but for the present they are quiescent. The time comes at length when the body, refreshed by slumber, feels rest a pain, and rises to put into active operation the powers with which it is endowed. The sleeper is a picture of Brahm before he roused himself to a state of activity. He was endowed with all the attributes of divinity, but did not use them. While he slumbered they were quiescent. But this state is not life. Life means activity, and at last in the flight of ages, Brahm begins his active existence. His first operations are necessarily creative; and, as creator, he is known by the name Brahma. The created and the creator however, are one and the same; for the physical sphere is only one of the forms in which the self-existent chooses to express himself. The creation has no separate, distinct existence. Creation is only the initial act. The universe does not continue to

exist without any further interference on the part of Brahm. It has to be upheld; and he continues to uphold it in his second character, under the name of Vishnu. As such he upholds the universe and nourishes life up to the period of maturity.

When maturity is attained he begins to recall the effete life. He now assumes his third name and character, and becomes Mahesh, the destroyer. As such, he calls back all life that has answered its end, to give it new being and endow it with fresh virility.

Hinduism is not a revealed religion. It is the product of the reasoning faculty of an intellectual race brought to bear upon the various phenomena of existence. Three things powerfully arrest our attention—birth, growth, death; and Brahma, Vish u, and Mahesh are simply the personification and deification of these phenomena.

As Brahma, Brahm has, of course, a place in the pantheon; but he is not worshipped. He has created and can do no more, and hence merits no praises.

As Vishnu, he is worshipped in the various incarnations to which he has condescended to mankind. The idea of his second manifestation is that of Brahma *coming down* to fill humanity with himself; hence it is only in *it* incarnations are possible. They are nine in number: (i.) the Fish āvatār; (ii.) the Tortoise; (iii.) the Boar; (iv.) the Man-lion; (v.) the Dwarf; (vi.) Rama; (vii.) the threefold incarnation of Rām, Lachman, Sitā; (viii.) Krishna. The ninth has still to come. *It* is to be a *sinless* incarnation!

As Mahesh the destroyer, he is worshipped as Māhādeo, Shiv, and many other appellations. Here there is a female principle of destruction as well: the consort of Māhādeo, called Parbatti; but she has, perhaps, a thousand other appellations according to the character she chooses to assume. As the goddess of small-pox, for instance, she is called Sitālā; as the destroyer and consort of Māhādeo, under his appellation of Shiv, she is called Durga; and as the goddess

of death she is known by the name of Kāli. The idea behind this manifestation is that of *gathering back;* of humanity *passing back again* to Brahm, the author and source of its life, till, in the roll and sweep of ages, he becomes all in all once more.

I have contracted much into a very few lines, and I shall be glad if I have not sacrificed clearness to brevity. Lest I should have done so, I give the following diagram as an additional help:

BRAHM.

BRAHMA, The Creator. He is not much worshipped.	VISHNU, The Preserver. He is worshipped in his 9 incarnations. They are	MAHESH, The Destroyer. He is worshipped under a great variety of appellations. The conception in this instance is that of humanity rendering themselves back to Brahm; of death sweeping up all effete fragments to be refertilized and purified.
	—1. The Fish. —2. The Tortoise. —3. The Boar. —4. The Man-lion. —5. The Dwarf. —6. Rama. —7. Rām, Lachman, Sitā. —8. Krishna. —9. To come. The conception of this manifestation is that of Brahm condescending to humanity.	

If this system of pure pantheism is Hindu philosophy, how is it that they are such notorious idolaters? There is at first sight a contradiction between them. We would naturally reason thus: if Brahm is all, and all is Brahm, there can be no worship, unless egotism inspires him to worship himself. This indeed is the case. The fragments of the great whole we call men and women, thrown off for the time from the central mass, find their religious centre of gravity in it, and gravitate to it in religious rites and ceremonies.

But how is this done? The philosophic Hindu justifies his physiolatry by saying: 'I cannot think of the unthinkable. I am finite; Brahm is infinite; and

I, the finite one, can never grasp the infinite; a part, I can never comprehend the whole. In my difficulty I take a piece of gold, silver, stone, brass, or wood, and give it a form. The form is immaterial; however grotesque, it must have an existence somewhere, as my mind cannot go beyond Brahm's, and call into existence what he has not imagined. This image comes within the range of my powers. My eye can take it in at a glance, my mind receive it. It is a part of the whole, and through it I offer my worship to the whole.'

The question has frequently been agitated in India among the European residents whether or not Hindus are idolaters in the sense of believing that the idol they worship is very god. It might be answered, 'Yes and No.' The cultured classes do not believe they are very God; the ignorant, ill-informed, who accept what they are told, believe, for the reason above indicated, that they are. For this belief the educated classes are responsible. While repudiating any interest in or regard for idols, they have frequently said to me: 'Idols are the alphabet of religion. You teach the human mind by a system of symbols that represent sounds. They have little connection with abstract ideas, but before you can convey complex thoughts to others at a distance you must acquire these symbols. You get beyond them in knowledge, but you cannot do without them. All thought requires words in which to frame itself, and these words are composed of letters. In the same way we give the ignorant, who cannot grasp abstract truths, nor rise to the realization of the spirituality of God, elementary symbols. Idolatry is for them.'

There is the assumption in this argument that either the lower classes should be kept in perpetual tutelage, or that they are incapable of refined thought. The Brahmin has taught that the Sudra has no birthright in the domain of religion, and has no claim to anything but the crumbs he allows to drop while

regaling himself with the rich bounties the servile credulity of the Sudra constrains him to lay at his feet. To retain their hold over the Sudra mind, they have taught them that religion is not *their* concern; that they are incapable of it, and must rely entirely upon the Brahmins.

The awakening has come at last. An impartial Government, one that dares hang a Brahmin, or release a Sudra, reigns supreme. It recognises no semi-gods; sees man in Brahmin and Sudra alike; treats them with an equal justice as subjects, and offers them the same educational advantages. The proud, haughty Brahmin has suffered; the Sudra has benefited. The Brahmin raises an outcry that low-caste men are being elevated, high-caste men depressed. The Sudra now serves the Government in positions of trust and responsibility, while many of the more ignorant Brahmins have sunk to the grade of coolie, and may be seen carrying sacks of grain or bales of cotton. Facts and new social conditions are giving the lie to what has been haughtily taught and meekly received through long ages. It is beginning to be seen in India for the first time

'That man is man for a' that.'

I must not omit to say that there is a school opposed to the Materialistic. Many teach that there is nothing but spirit, that there can be no material universe; that all we see is illusion. This is Bishop Berkeley's theory. Without, of course, placing the Bishop's theory in the category of modern thought, the mention of it in this connection leads me to say that what we call modern thought is really, for the most part, but old Hindu ideas percolating from their Sanscrit source through the German mind, and somewhat too readily gulped down by English readers. If I am right, and I think I could prove to some extent that I am, we are surely paying a very handsome tribute to the mighty intellects that pondered the problems of Divine existence and human being in the dawn of the

world's history. Great thinkers they were; gigantic ancestors of a pigmy race. Their Vedic system must not be confounded with Brahminism. Brahminism claims their glory without having their merit. The position of the latter is fairly well illustrated by one of their own stories, which I culled, if I remember rightly, from the 'Tota Kahāni; or, Tales of a Parrot':

'A lion and lioness had a litter of cubs, and while the lion went foraging for food the lioness stayed at home to tend her promising family. All night long he roamed the forest without so much as sighting game. Returning disconsolate in the morning he chanced on a baby jackal, which he picked up without hurting, and hurried home. He told the lioness he was very sorry he could find nothing better, but, small as it was, it was better than nothing. Her maternal instincts rose in revolt. "Why," she said, "it is not even a mouthful; instead of killing it I feel disposed to cherish it and bring it up with my own family. Poor little thing!" It was straightway adopted, and she nursed it along with her own. They grew together, played together, and when older organized a hunting expedition together. Roaming about, they saw an elephant, which caught sight of them at the same instant, and began trumpeting. The jackal no sooner heard the noise than it turned tail and fled. The young lions had always regarded it as an elder brother and fled with it. When they got home the lioness asked for an account of their adventures. This was given by her own offspring, who added, "We don't know why we ran away; we were not a bit afraid, but when our elder brother ran we ran also." "Ah!" said the lioness, "he is not your brother. I have fed him on lion's milk, but he has still the nature of a jackal. He is not fit to hunt, only to pick up scraps."'

The Brahmins have been fed on the thoughts of great minds, but delight themselves now in puerilities

instead of following up great themes. I say this without disrespect to them, for I recognise as much as anyone the high average ability of this caste, but they have little community with their gigantic ancestors.

The doctrine of transmigration is the logical outcome of pantheism, since, strange to say, that portion of Brahm called humanity is subject to a pollution from which it must be purified before it can be reabsorbed by him. Its progress upward is through an infinity of births, the character of which is regulated by the life last ended. If it has been ceremonially pure the course is upward, and the Sudra may be born a Brahmin; if impure, the Brahmin may change places with the Sudra or pass into the body of some animal or reptile.

The funeral of a Hindu lacks the solemnity which attends burial among Christians. The Christian in India is borne to the grave slowly and respectfully, upon, it may be, a gun-carriage or some conveyance adapted to the purpose, and the coffin is covered with a pall. The Mahometan, embalmed with the sweetest and most fragrant spices, is carried, hurriedly but respectfully, in a covered bier to the place of interment. The Hindu, unlike either, is wrapped in a thin cotton garment, red if a man, white if a woman, tied upon, or rather slung between, a couple of bamboos, and hurried off to the very primitive crematorium on which the body is to be reduced to ashes. As they go, the swinging gait of the carriers often loosens the cloth, and a foot or hand may be seen shaking as they hurry past with their warning cry:

'Rām is the self-existent One;
He that lived has passed on'—

a declaration of the mutability of man and the immortality of Rām.

The bearers and mourners are frequently accompanied by a native band, consisting of drums, cymbals and gongs. Latterly they have been able to secure

native 'German' bands—pray excuse the solecism—and the music is never of a very solemn or appropriate character. Turning to my notes I find this description of one, written down as the cortége passed: A long way off was heard the roll of drums, the shrill, piercing music of fifes, the drone of the conch, the lusty beating of gongs and the clash of cymbals. Nearer and nearer the procession came, till, at last, it passed us. A motley, dirty crowd clustered round a bier upon which lay a corpse wrapped in pink cloth, which was spangled all over with tinsel. Before it marched a German band playing

'When Johnnie comes marching home again, hurrah!'

I have frequently heard them playing

'We won't go home till morning,'

and

'See, the conquering hero comes!'

All Hindus, with the exception of lepers and a sect of mendicants, I believe, are cremated. The lepers they used to bury alive; many of these mendicants I have been told were buried alive at their own request.

The marghat or crematorium has a very black, sooty look. In Benares it is a kind of creek on the banks of the Ganges, at the end of a very fine ghāt. The bodies are taken down to the river and allowed to remain some time in its cleansing waters, which by-the-bye are very dirty just there, as a sewer discharges itself immediately above; but then Hindus believe that it is impossible to defile the Ganges! Sewage and festering bodies sailing down stream are not supposed to have any effect on it. I have actually seen a man stoop down beside a corpse, push the surface-water aside, fill his hand with it, and drink it! This *en passant*. After the body has been immersed some time, it is taken out, stripped, and laid on the pyre, which is lit with fire procured from a man of the *lowest* caste, whose fees enable him to fare sumptuously every day. The high castes despise him most

thoroughly, but cannot do without him. They cannot keep fire themselves. I once heard a learned pundit of the old orthodox school say in a lecture, 'While converts to other religions may be saved, a Brahmin who sells salt, beef, or lāi (a kind of sweetmeat)—that is, becomes a shopkeeper—must go to hell!' He might have included fire for the funeral pyre, for this business is regarded with horror. Nevertheless the man who supplies it runs no danger of contagion, as he does not apply but only supplies the fire to relatives, receives handsome fees, the clothes of the deceased—which he does not touch—amasses a fortune, lives in a fine house, and can well afford to laugh at their abhorrence of him.

The bodies are sometimes entirely consumed. As destruction advances a relative seizes a stout bamboo and smashes the skull and pelvis. If fuel is insufficient, and the relatives are too poor to buy more, it is pitched into the Ganges and allowed to float down stream The effluvia is most disgusting; besides which, they are a constant menace to health. I attended, in his last illness, a youth seventeen years of age, who died of typhoid fever. He was employed on the new bridge that spans the river, and in going along the gangway he, boy-like, contracted the bad habit of pushing the bodies about. One day he had a stick in his hand and tried to push one, very much swollen, under water. It required considerable force; the stick pierced the body and gave vent to the gas. The lad sickened almost immediately and died within a very few days. Cremation, if properly carried out, is, without doubt, the best and most effective mode of disposing of the dead, but as done by many Hindus is utterly offensive. The days of *sati* are passed and gone, but it is a sight one can never look upon without a feeling of horror to see the small stone tablets erected on the burning ghāts in memory of wives who have sacrified self, rather than outlive honour. The scenes they conjure up are terrible, but the cessation of the right has given

place to life-long suffering, shut off from our gaze, but terribly real to those who have to endure it. This is an incident merely, and one that could not have been foreseen by the Government of India when it made *sati* a criminal offence. Few reforms are unattended with suffering at first; but in time, when the disturbed factors begin to settle down to their proper relationship to each other, accidental circumstances are eliminated by order. This, happily, is taking place in India. The members of the Brahmo and kindred Somājes assert their right to espouse widows, and of widows to remarry; a position which will greatly ameliorate the sufferings of Hindu widowhood. The doctrine of transmigration makes Hindu life and practice a strange contradiction. It makes them cherish life and yet makes them callous to its sufferings; it makes them cherish birds and beasts while it makes them despise low-caste men and worship those of the higher castes. But I proceed to illustrations that will make this assertion clear. Of the abounding life of India there is perhaps nothing more prolific, more interesting as a study, or more industrious than the ant. The cricket may sing the live-long day, but his is an existence without forethought. He is a thorough spendthrift of time; suns himself as if the sun shone for his special benefit, and sips juices merely to refresh his heated system. Nobody cares for him, he thinks so little of himself. With him, 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.'

With the ant it is different. He is always busy; always in a hurry. You would think he had the care of the universe on his mind; and a care he undoubtedly has, as anyone may readily discover who unearths his carefully-planned world. There we find eggs and nurses, pupæ and attendants, whose wants have to be supplied, and from morning to night he is the very incarnation of industry, foraging and garnering for the wants of a community.

Solomon told the sluggard to observe and learn a

lesson from him; the Hindu evidently would not advise anyone to do that. He considers he has far too much work; more, indeed, than his fair share; that he requires some kindly assistance to bring up his too numerous progeny. Throughout the day sympathetic souls, who are anxious to lay up much treasure of righteous merit, and who forget the exhilaration of honest toil, try to deprive him of excitement and make his life an ennui, by anticipating his requirements and laying an offering of coarsely-ground flour at the entrance to his abode. With a pound or two of this wrapped in a corner of their garment, men and women may be seen roaming about in search of their nests, fostering and cherishing in the vicinity of houses creatures that, notwithstanding many good points, are a positive nuisance to the housekeeper. They go everywhere; they contrive somehow to get everywhere, but the science by which they do so is as mysterious as that by which the Pharaohs raised the pyramids or carved the sphinx. You put a spoonful of sugar in your tea, and when you have stopped stirring it, you find sundry legs, broken heads, fragments of the thorax, etc., floating about on the surface like drift on a miniature ocean. You must educate your taste or go without sugar, for, do what you may, they *will* get at it. You take a spoonful of jam and find you have entrapped one or more, who were busy on the edge when you put in the spoon, and before you can use it you must help them out of their difficulty. Grain is never safe from their attacks. On one occasion I had a small basketful of bajra, a small, coarse grain on which poultry is fed, in a room covered with matting made of strips of bamboo interlaced. I could not discover how it went; but go it did, and that very rapidly. One night I went in without a light to fetch a book I knew where to find. I was startled by the noise in what was an unoccupied room; it was like the far, faint march of an army. I hurried out to get a light, and on return-

ing found the floor black with ants, each busy carrying off a grain. The sides of the basket *inside* were covered with them; *outside* there were none. I stopped to watch their mode of operations, and it was certainly cleverly planned. There were two parties. One was engaged inside the basket. Their duty was to bring the grain to the top and from there to drop it to the carriers on the floor. These picked it up and hurried it off to their nest. In this way they emptied the basket in a very few days.

However, there is compensation in all things, and it is satisfactory to know that only one nest can live in a house at a time. The family may be numerous, but how terrible it would be if several nests could live in amity in the same building! They never allow invasion, except on the part of the white ant, which burrows from beneath, carefully protecting itself against attack from its enemies by throwing up a covered way. When the black ants do discover an opening to their nests, they attack them and bring them out one after the other to feed their own families with.

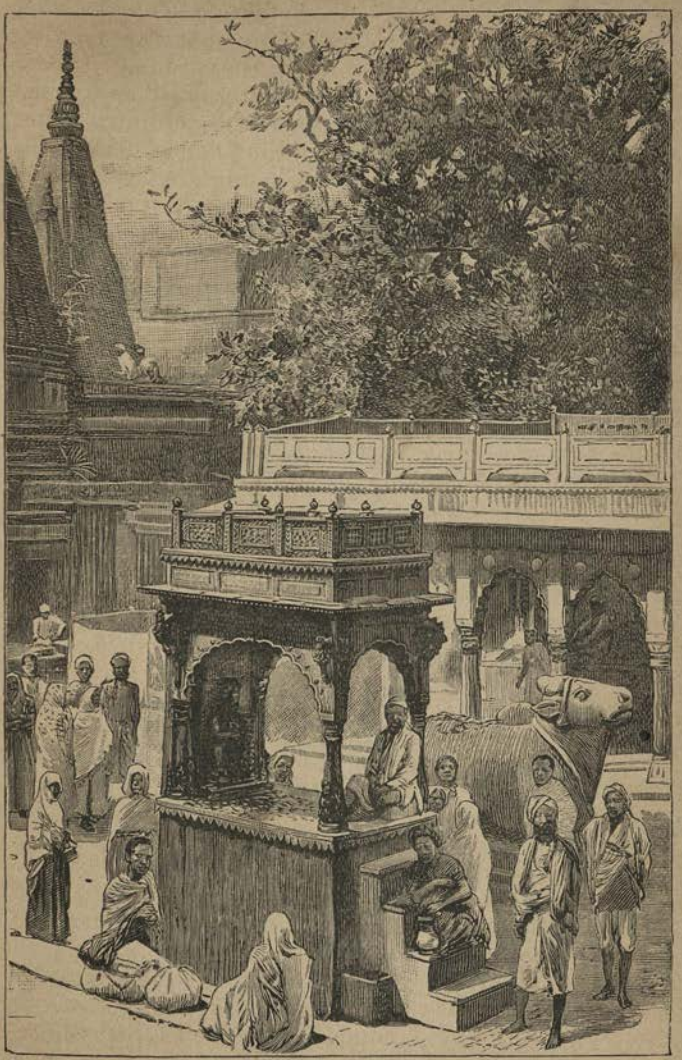
The Indian dog, which must certainly be very near of kin to the wolf, is a constant source of annoyance and danger to the pedestrian. Fierce, ugly, mangy, they swarm in every town and village, acting at once the part of scavenger and watchman about—not *in*-the houses to which they choose to attach themselves. They belong to nobody, so no one drowns the superfluous puppies; consequently the supply far exceeds the demand. They are not fed regularly, but pick up the scraps left over from meals, and are, as a result, half starved. The food supply is so scant that they resent the intrusion of strange dogs, even if they are only making a passage through their quarter. As soon as a stranger is sighted they gather up in force and start off in pursuit. Bold they are when six to one, but the moment the one stops and shows his teeth, they all halt and bark till he starts off again, when they try to bite him as he runs.

They have become so numerous that the municipalities have had to deal with them as a pest, but their well-meant efforts are counteracted to a very large extent by the action of the Hindus. The authorities have agreed to pay the Domes, one of the lowest castes, two annas for each dog they catch and kill. When a Dome gets hold of one, he puts a cord about its neck, secured to the end of a stick, by which he is able to keep it at a distance. Armed with a long, stout, loaded bamboo, he starts off with his victim through the bazaar, selecting the busiest streets and the lanes in which the most compassionate of the Hindus reside. He is nearly always successful in exciting pity. Someone, touched by the fate of the offensive brute, strikes a bargain for its release, paying him, say, two and a half annas to let it go, whereas the municipality would only pay two for its death. In this way their arrangements are defeated, and the dog nuisance is as great as ever.

At several of the temples in Benares, the *sanyāsīs*, or monks, prepare cakes for them daily; carry them out on a large basket, and feed the brutes that live in the vicinity. These are generally sleek and lazy, but terribly dangerous to foreign pedestrians. They never attack in front; they rush up from behind, deliver the attack, and run.

Rabies is very common. One suffering from it took possession of the road in front of my house, and bit everybody who came near. Six men, women, and children came to me to have their wounds cauterized, while others neglected the precaution. What became of it, or of those who neglected their wounds, I have no idea; it was allowed to escape without so much as anyone attempting to kill it.

It is well known that the cow and bull are sacred animals in India. The so-called religious reason for this will be found, I think, in the belief that Māhādeo (Mahesh) rode about upon a bull while on earth. In Benares, of which he is the tutelary deity, between



STONE BULL IN THE TEMPLE OF BISESHWARNĀTH, BENARES.

the temples erected to him, there is a very large stone bull, without which they evidently supposed their worship would be incomplete. The secular reason for their sanctity will be found, like many more Hindu customs, to be purely utilitarian. Famines are very common.* Failure of the monsoon brings terrible calamity upon the country. In the far distant age when their sanctity was first taught, they had no doubt to face similar calamities without having the means we have to combat the evil. If meat-eaters, the existence of the stock upon which an agricultural population so thoroughly depends would have been imperilled; the starving people would have eaten the cattle and left themselves without their sustaining produce and their labours. The only way to prevent this that would appear to have suggested itself to the Hindu mind, was to invest the stock with a religious character and treat its destruction as sacrilege. The utilitarian aspect of the question is now never thought of by the natives, only the religious; and when a rich man is anxious to perform a work of considerable merit he dedicates a bull or a cow to Māhādeo, and sets it loose on the community. This is really what it eventually amounts to; for he bears only the expense of purchase, not that of maintenance. Should it keep to the vicinity of the temples it gets plenty of stale leaves, garlands of marigolds, and other flowers offered by the devotees; if it chooses to stray it must forage for itself. Bulls invariably roam; they prefer the open country, green fields, and the company of herds, to the close lanes and sickly fare obtainable in the city. As they pass lazily through the streets they attack the vegetable-stalls, push their snouts into grain-baskets, or turn aside to regale themselves on rose-bushes when they pass a garden.

Their numbers are so excessive, and their depreda-

* On an average there is one every seven years in some part of the country: hence the need of the 'Famine Insurance Fund,' an English arrangement which had no counterpart under Native rule.

tions so great, that the municipal authorities have begun to take measures to suppress them. The long-suffering Hindu would like to see them suppressed; but while he would like to see the streets cleared of what is an undoubted nuisance, he dreads to do it himself. He waits for the English rulers to relieve him of his enemy, and would utter not one word of protest if they took even more active measures than they do at present to cope with the evil.

Now they may be seen yoked in municipal carts patiently removing the city refuse or drawing water to irrigate the public gardens, so wisely provided by a Government which studies the good of its subjects in every possible way. Owners may not quite like it; but they can take no steps to prevent this wise use of strong animals. By dedicating them to Māhādeo their right in them has been transferred to him; should they maintain that they are still their property, they may be called upon to pay very heavy bills for the destruction they have wrought to standing crops and flower-gardens. As a result of this dilemma they are obliged to regard the desecration in silence. But they are not merely destructive; they are positively dangerous. Twice I have escaped only by allowing a frightened horse the rein, and putting as great a distance between the vicious brutes and myself as superior speed would allow. One of these races had a ludicrous finale. During the rainy season of 1875, I had occasion to visit a school twelve miles distant from headquarters, the way to which lay through a rather thick, wild jungle. Mounted on a sturdy galloway, I reached my destination without adventure. Meanwhile great, heavy clouds banked themselves up overhead, intercepting the powerful rays of the sun and toning the temperature. As I set out on my return journey the storm broke; the lightning flashed, the thunder pealed, the rain came down like a solid sheet. Pace seemed impossible, so drawing my hat well down over my face, we walked quietly along for about

five miles. We had got well abreast of a village when my horse gave a spring that almost unseated me, and galloped forward as if all the witches that chased 'Tam O'Shanter' were after it. Righting myself as best I could, I looked back and saw a fine bull with head set to the charge and tail erect, in hot pursuit. I was not a little anxious, as we were approaching the most difficult portion of the road, where it was cut by a stream, the further bank of which had to be ascended by a mere goat-path. However, on we went, when to my dismay I saw a train of bullocks, laden with skins of oil, slowly descending the slippery path. To stop was out of the question, even if I could have persuaded the horse to obey the rein. Into the swollen stream we plunged, and reached the bottom of the bank, when the bullocks, startled by the rush, wheeled round and fled, relieving themselves of their burdens as they ran. I could not halt, and all the cries and entreaties of their owners were unavailing to stop them, till, reaching the next village, which happily was not far distant, they dispersed along the lanes. There I imagine the bull gave up the chase, as I saw it no more.

The Mahometans, if I dare venture to believe my informant, himself a member of that community, have devised a much more expeditious plan of clearing the city of these pests. They place, according to his account, a tempting bundle of grass at the slaughter-house gates at night, and wait till a Brāhmani cow attacks it, when they make a rush, drive it in, close the gates, and bring it out in the morning as beef!

The existence of these slaughter-houses in native cities is a terrible scandal to the Hindu. Whether it is they are aware that the Mahometans entrap and slaughter the sacred cattle; or the feeling of sacrilege; or the feeling they cherish of the sacredness of life, I am unable to conjecture; but it is an undoubted fact, that within the last year numbers of Hindu monks have been working upon the feelings of the community

till the 'beef question' has taken a somewhat acute form, and it has required a great deal of watchfulness on the part of the authorities to prevent riots. They are anxious that the Government should forbid the slaughter of kine; forgetful that some 70,000,000 of Indian Mahometans eat beef; and that they are the strongest, the most dashing, and perhaps the bravest of the population, if we except the Sikhs. Their right to consideration cannot and will not be disregarded.

The degree of sanctity that attaches to kine may be surmised from the fact that pilgrims and women will stop them in the streets, raise their heads and kiss their snouts, or rub their heads with their foul tails, in the belief that an act so repulsive conveys some degree of purity.

And yet no class of people anywhere is so heartlessly cruel, so callous to suffering, and to the agonies of death as the Hindus who hold the doctrines of transmigration and the sacredness of life. They will not slay for food; but they will work the poor brutes when covered with sores, caused by excessive labour; or even cause the sores, as they compel them to exertions to which they are not equal. They will twist their tails till they break; goad them most cruelly in the most sensitive parts of the body, and leave them to all the agonies of a lingering death, rather than release them from their sufferings, as we would do, by a well-directed blow or shot.

One morning, in the hot season of 1880, I was riding down a village street, just outside the municipal bounds of Delhi, but within a quarter of a mile of a large police-station, when I saw a buffalo lying in the middle of the road suffering terribly. Yoked in a heavily-laden cart the day before, it stumbled, and sustained a compound fracture of the thigh. The ends of the bone protruded some distance, though they could scarcely be seen for the clouds of flies. There it had lain for eighteen hours, all through the burning heat of the day, without any attempt at alleviation by

its owner, or a drop of water to quench its thirst. The people looked, but rendered no help; carts worked carefully round it, their drivers offering no pity; there it lay, dogs waiting for its death that they might have something to feast upon. I tried to engage help and pity, but to no purpose. There it continued to lie till the following day, when, at length, death released it from further suffering.

All creatures are treated with an equal want of mercy. I was coming through one of the bazaars in Benares one day, when I passed a hackney-carriage drawn by a pair of ponies so traced that their legs crossed, and as they ran, urged on by whip and angry shout, they rubbed each other so much that the ankle bones were nearly exposed. It is useless to remonstrate, for no one listens to complaints when it is only a case of 'cruelty to animals.'

Their conduct has often greatly puzzled me, it is so very contradictory. They will not kill, but they will allow suffering and look on it with stoical indifference; they will object to a man killing a cow and eating beef, while they will regard with calm indifference the attacks of animals upon each other. I witnessed a very striking instance once. While preaching under a large tree one morning, a *sanyāsī*, or mendicant, stood quietly listening. It was spring, and the sparrows were busy tending their fledglings. They had got them out of the nest, and were trying to incite them, by means of much chirping, to bolder flights. The noise attracted a crow that happened to be passing, and flying into the tree it pursued one of the young birds. The scene was being enacted a few feet about our heads, so, snatching a stick from a man standing by me, I pitched it at the crow and saved the sparrow. As it flew away, the *sanyāsī* asked me very quietly, why I frightened the crow and saved the life of the sparrow.

'Because I did not like to see it killed,' I answered.

'But you kill cows for food, don't you?'

'No; certainly not.'

'But you eat their flesh when they are killed, don't you?'

'Yes.'

'Why?'

'Because God has given them to be our food.'

'Oh! He has! Well, if He has given you permission to kill and eat the flesh of cattle, He has provided the sparrow for the crow's food in the same way. Why did you deprive it of its meal?'

'Why? Because I did not like to see that wretched crow kill a poor little bird like that.'

'And yet your sympathy never compels you to prevent the butcher killing creatures that supply us with so many comforts!'

On one occasion, many years ago, a friend of mine was driving slowly along the Delhi-Agra section of the Grand Trunk Road, not far from Delhi. For thirty miles it runs through the ruins of former cities that rose and declined according to the caprice of the reigning monarch. The ruins afford excellent cover for snakes, and they make the most of them. As my friend passed one of the stately tombs that still give definiteness to the view, he heard a pair of birds twittering as if afraid of something. Going nearer, he noticed they were trying to defend their nest against a cobra that was quietly working its way upwards. There was a gardener working immediately below, whom he asked to take some steps to protect the young birds.

'Oh no!' said the man. 'They were provided for it, and I shall not interfere with the arrangements of Providence.' With that, he went on with his work, and my friend drove off.

Towards evening he passed the spot again, driving homewards. Afar off he heard the wail of a woman, and on coming to the place saw a crowd of men surrounding some object lying prostrate on the ground.

'What is the matter?' he asked.

'Nothing,' said one of the crowd. 'This man was working here when a snake fell off that ledge on to his back, and before he had time to escape it bit him, and he is dead. That's all.'

Most people would have thought it something. Had he taken the precautions ordinary prudence would have suggested in the presence of a venomous reptile like the cobra, he might have saved his life; but he would rather sacrifice it to a false conception of the order and fitness of things.

The belief in transmigration and caste is very much mixed up. They believe that originally the Brahmins sprung from the head of Brahm; the Sudras from his loins; the low castes from his feet. But a Brahmin, for ceremonial offences, may be degraded to expiate his wickedness in the form of a Sudra in the next life; while, as I remarked before, the ascetic Sudra may become a Brahmin. What those now living may have been is by no means clear, but the Brahmin can rejoice in the conviction that *he* was pure; the Sudra can only cry 'Unclean,' and suffer in meekness the humiliation of his lot, and do all in his power to retrieve the failure that brought him so low.

If, then, a Sudra is suffering for his past offences, the castes higher than his own, and consequently not so wicked, must do nothing to abate his punishment by making his lot easy; while all of them must try and improve their position by laying up the merit which is involved in relieving a Brahmin from all mundane cares. It will be seen at once how beliefs like these work, and the social fruits they bear. They were good for the Brahmin at one time, though the halcyon days are vanishing before the increasing light of Western civilization, and the democratic teaching which throws itself upon the shores of India week after week in constantly increasing volume. I recollect a Brahmin lamenting those days. Memory was eloquent in its details. Going back forty years he

said, 'In my younger days a Brahmin was a demi-god; everyone deemed it an honour to render him a service. If he was invited to a wedding they never thought of giving less than a cow; or, if the present was in money, less than a mohur (16 rupees); now they grudge a two-anna piece, and the poor Brahmins have to work for their daily bread. Alas! alas! we have fallen on evil days when a Brahmin counts for no more than any other man.'

But even now caste distinctions hold sway to a vast extent, and afford us some idea of what the system meant before successive links of the chain were weakened or broken. Though they would not admit it, the various castes are practically callous to the sufferings and sorrows of those lower than themselves. But I must show how true this is by means of the following experiences.

Our church in Delhi stands in the Chāndi Chauk, the main thoroughfare of the city, extending from the Lahore Gate of the Fort to the Lahore Gate of the City. In front of the church is the Khuni Darwāza, or Gate of Blood, so named from the fact that it is the entrance to the narrow street in which the worst barbarities perpetrated in the city, when sacked by the Persians under Nādir Shāh, took place. Adjoining it to the right was a two-storied brick house, or what is called in India 'Kachchha-Pakka,' as the bricks are laid in mud instead of mortar.

One Sunday morning during the rains of 1880—and it had rained steadily for three days—we were engaged in the service when we were startled by the crash of a falling house. I happened to be sitting by the door, and turning round, saw the masonry and beams coming down in a confused mass. Shortly before I had looked at the building, but saw no reason for supposing it was in danger; and the shopman evidently had no idea the walls were being undermined, for he was busy weighing out various commodities to several customers who were equally unconscious of

danger. The service was brought to a close, and those of us who were present went to work to dig out the seven or eight persons who were reported buried under the débris. And we were left to do it alone, although hundreds of natives hurried up to look on. Not a man would assist. We appealed in vain; for the only reply we got to our requests for assistance was, 'We don't know what caste they are of.' About half an hour after the collapse of the building an army of labourers came up, and with their aid we dug out eight men who had been buried close on an hour. One poor fellow had a heavy beam resting over his chest; all seemed terribly injured, and we thought, as we placed them on the litters and sent them off to the hospital, not one could survive. What was my surprise, on inquiring after them next day, to find they had all gone home not much the worse for their experience of falling bricks and timber!

One Sunday night in the cold season of 1885 I was returning home about 8 p.m. The night was very dark, the lamps were few, and, to get home, I had to drive through a bazaar cursed with several liquor-dens, frequented, for the most part, by men of low caste. The horse I was driving was fresh, but thoroughly under control, and my lamps were burning brightly. I saw nobody ahead, till of a sudden, as we came abreast of one of these disreputable 'pubs,' a man staggered out on to the road and reeled against my horse. He was thrown forward with considerable force, but luckily he had on a thick turban, which protected his head. I drew up and hurried back. The man was lying face downwards, breathing heavily. I called for help. Doors opened on both sides, and perhaps fifty faces peered out into the darkness asking in chorus, 'What has happened?' I replied by asking for water to revive the man; but not a soul would give it. Each pleaded, as an excuse for refusing, that he did not know his caste, and that if the water he could give was sprinkled upon him it might break

it! All said, 'Go home, sir, and leave him; he is drunk, not hurt.'

As a policeman had come up I handed him over to his care, and hurried off to get a hackney-carriage to convey him to the hospital; but on my return he was gone. Fearful of consequences, the liquor-dealers had hurried him away, and despite my inquiries I was never able to learn whether he had sustained any serious injury or not.

The extraordinary part of this affair was that low-caste people refused to give the water, lest the injured man should be of a higher caste than themselves, in which case their kindness would become a curse by defiling him and destroying his caste!

High-caste men are, of course, equally careful of their purity. They will not readily touch a very low-caste man; and, as there is quite a number of Brahmins in the police-force, it is amusing to observe the expedients they adopt to take low-caste prisoners into custody.

One evening, in 1883, I was riding home from work in Benares when I passed through a quarter of the city occupied by the lowest of all castes. At the time they were preparing for a fight. Armed with bamboos, they were divided into two lines waiting to deliver the attack. Without a moment's thought I dashed between them, and stopped the fight between the *men*, who seized the reins, stirrups, straps, my hands and my legs, and asked me to decide which was right in the matter under dispute. I was so thoroughly hemmed in I could not get near the *women*, who, with loins girt, were trying to pull each other's hair out. Hearing the cries, the high-caste policemen hurried up and interposed. They were too pure to touch the combatants except with their sticks and shoes; but with these they belaboured them most shamefully. I expostulated, but to no purpose. I was told the treatment that gave me offence was the recognised mode of dealing with a caste so degraded!

It has no doubt struck readers, as it struck me, that none of the men were seriously hurt by the falling of the house. I have since witnessed similar wonderful escapes, and have commenced to think that the Hindu has a fund of vitality far in excess of other races. Out of several cases, I give the following, as I again happened to be an eye-witness:

In 1882, the 13th Hussars, then under the command of that 'born cavalry leader,' and most kindly of men, Colonel Sir Baker Russell, K.C.M.G., etc., etc., were lying at Muttra, where I was then stationed. They had just come down from Candahar, where they had been unable to arrange for the Balaclava games, an annual institution since that famous charge in which the regiment bore an honourable part. They were arranged for shortly after their arrival, and among other amusements they had a 'grass-cutters' race' on their programme. The grass-cutters, attached to cavalry regiments, keep ponies, as they have to go long distances and bring in heavy loads. These hard-worked, miserably-fed steeds were to run a given distance and jump a ditch, dug, and filled with water for the occasion. Some thoughtless fellow, thinking to increase the fun, rolled in an empty barrel before the signal was given to start; everybody else was in ignorance of its existence, so the signal was given and off went the ponies in good style. The excitement among the riders was very great. They knew about the water, and were prepared for a wetting, but not for obstacles that might imperil their life. The first pony made an excellent jump, but failed to clear the ditch. Unfortunately it came down on the barrel, and before it recovered its footing, the others followed it one after the other, until the ditch was full of ponies and men piled up in a heap. The scene was heart-rending, for it seemed impossible for any of the unfortunate riders to escape without serious injury. Able, willing hands set to work and lifted them out, when it was found that only one man was hurt.

When taken out he was unconscious, and was carried off to the hospital, which had then the advantage of the services, as house-surgeon, of a most skilful native doctor. He recovered consciousness shortly after admission, and was discharged the following morning, none the worse for his unpleasant experience.

Needless to say, the officers were in no way to blame for the occurrence. A more humane body of gentlemen it would have been impossible to find, and I shall not readily forget their many acts of kindness to us, when for eight months we were so sick and ill that ultimate recovery appeared impossible. Their kindness, as well as that of the resident Europeans, stands out clear and distinct against the dark colours in which generalization, from a fairly wide experience, has compelled me to represent the conduct of Hindus under somewhat similar circumstances. My claims on them were no stronger than those of the injured Hindus on their fellow-countrymen; but they could respond to the impulse of humanity; and what they did for me, thousands of Englishmen are doing in India every day for their native fellow subjects. Despite all adverse criticism, I am convinced no Government nor people has ever done for a subject race what England and Englishmen are now doing for the enlightenment, the civilization, the secular and religious advantage of the Hindus.

But while the low castes almost worship the Brahmins, and every caste looks down with undisguised contempt on those beneath it, how do those of the same caste treat each other? For the most part, I fancy, much as Englishmen would treat their equals. But in India every caste has its subdivisions. The Brahmins are not all equally respected: there are Brahmins *and* Brahmins. Those that serve as priests to low castes suffer in honour, and those who have kept themselves pure would no more think of intermarriage with them than they would with blacksmiths or sweepers. This distinction gave rise to the

following amusing experience, related to me by the Brahmin who had the mortification to undergo it:

He was an accountant in a bank in Delhi when the mutiny broke out. The building was attacked, the manager cruelly murdered and the treasure looted. Afraid to remain in the city, he packed a few articles in a napkin, and passing out at one of the gates, took the road for Meerut. The news of the revolt had meanwhile spread far and near; bands of dacoits were scouring the country, pillaging the villages and murdering any who were brave enough to offer resistance. Of this our friend was ignorant, and was very much hurt when he was surrounded by a band of armed men and called upon to give up his bundle. Instantly he showed his thread and asked what they meant by stopping a Brahmin. When they heard his caste they made him a profound but sarcastic salaam and asked him to be kind enough to sit down. This he did, all sitting round about him except one man, who hurried off towards a village and brought a friend back with him. The new comer salaamed and asked: 'Are you a Brahmin?'

'Yes.'

'Well met; so am I. Do me the favour of giving me your bundle;' a request which was met by a very hearty peal of laughter from the thieves.

The old man finished his narrative with flashing eyes and a cynical twist of his lips as he added: 'They actually kept a Brahmin to rob Brahmins.'

That old man had a kindly heart. He had as great an affection for his manager as one of his caste could be expected to cherish for anyone outside of it, and never ceased to lament that he had not the good fortune to be born a Brahmin. 'Never mind,' he would say, 'he is a thoroughly good man and will be all right in the next birth.' But, alas! for his good wishes, they tell a story that shows progression is not always upward. Here it is.

Years ago, just after the English Government made

it an offence at law for holy men to wander about in a state of nature, a mendicant, wearing only a suit of ash dust, appeared in the cantonments of, I think, Lucknow. He was carried before the English magistrate, who provided him with a waist cloth, and warned him that a repetition of the offence would entail a flogging. The mendicant went away, only to

HINDU MENDICANTS.

walk about on the following day in the same state. Again he was arrested and brought before the magistrate, who forthwith ordered him ten stripes and another piece of cloth. The news of the chastisement spread far and wide with the rapidity of bazaar 'gūp.'* As he sauntered along to the city in his new

* Persian: talk, gossip.

cloth, they chaffed him about his flogging, for which he assigned them this explanation:

'In the last life I was a washerman and this magistrate was my donkey. I used to treat him abominably. I would load him up with two heavy bundles till his legs were bending under him, then sit on the top of them and whip him up. In this life relations have changed. I have been born a mendicant, he a magistrate, that he may pay me back in my own coin the injury I did him.'

This reminds me of a very singular Jewish belief. One evening, being at tea with several converts from Judaism, I heard one of them remark: 'May he be my donkey!' at which they all burst into a merry peal of laughter, which did not abate any the sooner that I had no clue to the reference. At last one of them enlightened me. He said the Jews have a belief that when Messiah comes, the Gentiles will be turned into donkeys for them to ride back upon. Now, in the days of their humiliation, when a Jew is offended by a Gentile, he says: 'May he be my donkey, that I may have the satisfaction of paying him out!' A devout wish certainly!

CHAPTER V.

Moral Survey of Hinduism—'Lakh;' Lac, or Rs. 100,000?—A Spurious Diamond—'Plenty fool man come next time'—How Pilgrims are Fleeced—How the 'gods' make Revelations—An Ancient Tree—A Hindu Miracle—Fakirs' Curses—Unbelieving Europeans—Religion and Imposture—A Bed of Spikes—A Man who never Lies Down!—Dowerless Beauties—Undefined Humanity—Dry Arms—A Holy Man—Justifiable Lying—How Sick Certificates are Manufactured—Temples and their Inhabitants—Monkeys: Animal or God?—The Danger of injuring them—The Brahmin and the Monkey—A Mischievous Monkey—Snakes: why worshipped—Caste among Snakes—The Serpent that paid dearly for Milk—'The World always returns Evil for Good'—A Snake on Guard—Attacked by a 'flying' Snake—'Bruise its head'—Why the State went into Mourning.

WE may now enter upon a survey of the moral aspects of Hinduism: and they are such as might be expected from a system which virtually denies moral obligation, and credits the author and *substance* of all manifestations, whether they be animate or inanimate, with the errors, the failings and sins, as well as with the virtues of every sentient creature. This is the logical outcome of Pantheism. If all is God, whatever is, or transpires, is divine action, the mere sequence of being, without any reference to morals. The effects of this belief may be inferred: there is a want of moral restraint which gives play to those phases of character we call vicious, and a lack of shame in the perpetration of unhallowed deeds. I am, of course, well aware that they have a moral code, and that the higher and more refined natures draw a distinction between actions; but with these I am not at present concerned: the conduct of the *people* is the logical

sequence of belief, and their conduct is to engage our attention.

Benares is the sacred city of the Hindus. Twelve centuries before our era it was to them what it still is. Everything about it is sacred. Its soil purifies by the act of contact, even where intention is absent. Its temples and tanks are rendered sacred by the narratives of its mythology; while the great purifier, the river Ganges, rolls by its banks and sweeps away in its forward rush any defilement possible to men and women so greatly blessed as those who enjoy the privilege of spending their days in it. Its priesthood partakes, of necessity, of the general character: they are the most sacred of the sacred. If we take their life as exhibiting the highest range attained in morals by the community, the result will be somewhat startling. I shall allow them to criticise themselves. and judge them out of their own mouths. This holy priesthood, then, says of itself, 'Kāshi bāshi, satya nāshi, *i.e.*, 'Those who live in Benares are the destroyers of truth!' and there can be no doubt that from it, as a centre, the most pestilential errors sweep out in ever-enlarging circles all over India. Vicious, covetous, deceptive, indolent, superstitious, haughty, a moral malaria blows from them in a steady current all round the Peninsula. When a stranger from the Deccan visited the city, he ventured to make a pun on its name, somewhat in the following words:

'Jis men *bāna* hūā hai *ras*
Sōhi hai Banāras,'

i.e., 'The city in which all pleasures are found ready made, is Benares.' It was meant as a compliment; but when we remember that he referred to pleasures in the Hindu sense of the word, he said the most damning thing he could have uttered of any place.

I take another class, the braziers, who make the brass idols we so frequently see in England, and the other brass instruments and vessels used in temple

worship. These say of themselves: 'Thatheri, Thatheri nahin badla hoi,' *i.e.*, 'No brazier ever deals with a brazier,' the implication being that all braziers are such known cheats that one of the class never deals with another. The Khayast or Writer caste is notoriously corrupt and deceitful. To the rich and influential they are cringing and servile; to the poor, overbearing and contemptuous, while their main business in life is to scheme and plan how they may circumvent both. Of them it is said:

'Khāyat kā bachchhā kabhi nā sachchha,
Sachchha to haram kā bachchhā,'

i.e., 'The offspring of a Writer is never truthful; if one should happen to be truthful, he is illegitimate.'

No *class* is open, straightforward, honest, though individuals may be found whom you can trust implicitly. I think I have only met with two such. The system is, as I have already remarked, against their production, and the surprise is rather that any should rise above it than that the vast majority sink to its level. The religious conscience, if I may be allowed the expression, is ever the highest, and if religion places no check on immorality we cannot well be surprised at national debasement. Every class has its stories of trickery and deceit in which it revels. Take the jewellers, of whom and from whom I had the following:

In one of the native states of Central India there was a Rajah noted for his love of gems and display; and the patronage he was ever ready to extend to jewellers as a class. One he appointed custodian of the state jewels, and generally acted upon his advice. But on one occasion a member of the caste presented himself in the royal presence, during that officer's absence, with a ruby that sparkled so magnificently that he was all eagerness to secure it. Holding it lovingly in his hand he asked the price.

'Lakh, your Highness,' replied the jeweller, playing upon the word, which means equally *wax* and *one*

hundred thousand. He wished to say it was a composition of wax, the Rajah to believe it was worth 100,000 rupees; and he succeeded to perfection.

'A lakh,' cried the Rajah, 'only a lakh! Oh, treasurer, pay this jeweller a lakh.'

The officer paid the money, and the jeweller departed to enjoy the proceeds of deceit. For months the ring sparkled and glittered on the Rajah's finger, the admiration and envy of all who saw it. The Persians say there are two things that cannot be hid: love and musk; they might have added a few more and included deceit: for, like murder, it will out. The cold season came round after months of brilliant sunshine, and though the temperature was still high for more northerly latitudes, it was bitterly cold contrasted with the heat of preceding months. Those who could afford it were encased in quilted garments well padded with cotton, and enjoyed the luxury of a big fire indoors after sunset. Such a fire blazed in the palace. The Rajah sat in front of it surrounded by the usual crowd of sycophants who are ever in attendance on Eastern sovereigns, when suddenly one of them exclaimed, 'Your Highness, the brilliant, unpurchasable ruby that sparkled in the light of your countenance has fallen out of your ring!' It was gone! The setting was all right, except that its edges were discoloured and greasy with molten wax. Looking on the floor for the treasure they found a drop of wax; nothing else. This, however, excited suspicion. Could the ruby have melted? Impossible. If it had, it was only a composition, and that drop of highly coloured wax, so closely resembling the lustre of the lost gem, looked suspicious. Suspicion gave place to certainty, and messengers were despatched in hot haste to arrest the deceiver.

When he appeared the Rajah was in an unkingly tremor of passion. Loading him with all the delicacies of Eastern abuse, he demanded: 'What was that ruby?'

'Lākh,' your Highness.

'Lākh!' thundered the Rajah. 'Lākh! How dare you admit your deceit so calmly?'

'Your Highness,' replied the jeweller, 'will please recall what passed when I brought it. You asked what it was, and I honestly replied lākh; whereupon your Highness ordered me a lākh of rupees. You will see the fault is not mine, for I had no intention of imposing on your Highness!'

I suppose all Indian Rajahs are fond of gems; but then that need not surprise us, since the weakness is of such extended geographical diffusion. The only difference between them and some other people who claim to be more civilized is, that they delight in barbaric display, and have always had the means of gratifying their passion. In all the stories about gems, therefore, we have a Rajah as one of the actors. This is another of them.

Somewhere in the vicinity of the Salt Mines in the Punjab, a diamond-cutter discovered a piece of rock salt as clear and almost as hard as a diamond. The resemblance was so very close that none but an expert could have told the difference. He saw in the crystal the prospect of easily-acquired wealth. Laying it on his wheel, he cut it into so many angles that it glittered and sparkled like a diamond of the purest water. The imitation was so perfect that he imagined it would be impossible for ordinary purchasers to discover its true character. Presenting himself in the presence of a Rājput Rajah, he requested his acceptance of a ring, fit only to be worn by one of his rank and nobility. The Rajah was charmed, and passed it round his court to be examined by his suite, who were asked what ought to be given to the man who made an offering so precious. Round it went, each in turn expressing surprise and pleasure, and naming fabulous sums as the amount of the reward, till it reached the old court jeweller. He had not a single word of praise to offer. The Rajah, indignant

at his silence and seeming contempt, demanded an explanation of conduct so disrespectful.

He replied by asking the Rajah to have a goblet of water brought in.

The order was given, but very ungraciously; and the whole court wondered what he intended doing.

When it was brought, he said, 'Will your Highness please put the ring in it?'

With unfeigned reluctance he dropped it into the water, wondering what he should be asked to do next.

'Will your Highness please stir it for a few minutes,' said the jeweller; and the Rajah commenced to stir, all the more vigorously because of his annoyance.

At last the jeweller quietly said, 'Now, drink it.'

The Rajah raised the goblet, but quickly lowered it with a horrible grimace. 'Salt!' he cried. 'Oh, how salt!'

Everybody rushed to take the vessel from his hand thinking he was poisoned; all except the jeweller, who sat quietly watching the scene, and the diamond-cutter, who availed himself of the excitement to escape.

When they resumed their seats after finding he was safe, the jeweller continued the play by saying, 'Pour out the water, and take out the ring.'

The Rajah obeyed with greater alacrity than before; but when the ring was taken out it was minus the gem that had excited so much admiration.

'Where is it?' cried the Rajah.

'Melted, your Highness,' said the jeweller.

'Then, what was it?'

'Only a crystal of rock salt!'

Everybody looked for the diamond-cutter, but, like the gem, he had disappeared, and was found no more. The abrupt termination is characteristic of Hindoo stories; they always leave off just when we would hear more. In the following we are carried further forward,

and leave off with a different feeling—the desire to know who the actors were.

All who have travelled to the east of Ceylon, and have called at Colombo *en voyage*, will remember the Mahometan jewellers who come on board with 'flash jewellery.' They are as cunning and deceitful a set of men, though bearing a license, as can be found anywhere. The jewellery they offer looks very attractive, and they ask a very attractive price for it *to begin with;* but, since every article has to be bargained for, they will eventually come down about 80 per cent., or even more. Their wares are capital imitations of first-rate jewellery.

There is a story to this effect: On board a homeward-bound steamer there was a large company who had everyone been bitten on their way out. All remembered their annoyance, and determined not to look at the jewels, lest they should fall victims to deceit once more. As the anchor was let go the traders clambered on deck, and one of them, holding in his hand an emerald ring, rushed to the place where the passengers stood in a group. The ring was so lovely they all forgot their good resolutions; each looked at it, and all asked the price. 'Three hundred rupees,'* said the trader, without the slightest show of misgiving. 'Three hundred rupees!' was the general exclamation; 'three hundred rupees! take it away at once,' and with that they turned their backs upon him, and refused to respond to his persistent efforts to secure a hearing.

Coaling done, the order 'heave away' was given; in a few minutes more the vessel would be steaming out to sea, but the jeweller still stood on the deck, hoping they might patronise his wares at the last moment. At length one of the gentlemen said, 'Before we go I shall have a little fun at his expense; I shall offer him one rupee (2s.) for it.' Accordingly he rose,

* Then £30.

walked over to him, and said, 'I tell you what, before we leave I should like to make just a little purchase. I shall give you a rupee for that emerald ring.' To his amazement the jeweller replied, 'Take, sir!' and put the ring into his hand. The gentleman looked at it, paid the money, and then said, 'I know this is worth a great deal more than I have given you for it, though it is not worth anything like so much as you asked at first. Tell me how you can afford to sell it at the price.'

'Oh!' said the trader, 'that is easily explained. "*Plenty fool man come next time.*"'

No comments are needed. He was about right. People on shipboard pay absurd prices, and know it, for whatever is pleasing to the eye. But I must give the end of the story. On reaching London the gentleman took the ring to a high-class firm and asked their opinion on it. At first they were thoroughly puzzled. They thought the stone was good, though they saw at once the ring was only gold washed. Then they were doubtful, and ended by asking the gentleman to leave it for a few days till they could apply some test. On calling for it, their decision was against it; but they admitted that it was such a clever imitation that it was very difficult to detect.

We pass to another class, the priests of a large heathen city, which is visited every year by many thousands of pilgrims; indeed, I have seen the roads so crowded that it was impossible to go against the stream. I refrain from public mention of its name. I may, however, say that a more debauched class of men it would be difficult to find even in India. They revel in wickedness, and make a practice of consuming large quantities of Indian hemp to stimulate all the lowest passions. But need this surprise us in the professors of a religion which finds its expression in nature worship?

It is impossible to tell from his dress to what class of society a pilgrim may belong. They purposely

cultivate a form of habit which will make it impossible to say whether they are rich or poor; for the priests are so rapacious that they bleed them to the last extremity. I was one day passing through the city when I met a group of very woe-begone-looking pilgrims. Addressing them, I asked their trouble, when a young man, who was their guide and spokesman, said, 'I am the leader of this party. At my instigation they set out upon this pilgrimage. Our funds were limited; indeed, when we arrived in the city, we had just on an average eight rupees each. At the station we were met by a number of priests, who asked us from what district we came. When we told them, a stout man with keen, piercing eyes came forward and said, "You are mine; come with me." We followed him, and when on the road he said, "You must do all I tell you. How much money have you got?" "Eight rupees each," I replied. "Oh! follow me; you will want to get away soon, won't you?" "Yes," I replied. And he took us away at once to a large temple. On entering, he led us to a priest and said: "You must give this holy man one rupee each." We obeyed; each gave him a rupee, and we passed on, after receiving his blessing, to a great idol. "This," said our guide, "is a god who must be worshipped with large offerings. You cannot offer less than two rupees each, if you would escape his anger; if you want his blessing you must give three rupees." We gave our money to the attendant priest to secure the blessing of the god, and passed on. Our money was half done; but our worship had only begun. He took us to another temple, and there our remaining money was swallowed up. Then he took us to another, and told us to make an offering to the Brahmins. I said, "We have no more; we have already given all we had." "What!" cried the priest, "do you mean to say you have come into this holy place without an offering? Do you not fear the anger of the god? Do you mean to say you engaged me to guide you, and that now

you cannot pay me for my services? Come, come; this is mere pretence. You have plenty of money; out with it." I assured him we had no more. Then he reviled us terribly; ejected us from the temple—and here we are, no better for our pilgrimage, minus our money, far from home, and knowing not whither to turn for food and shelter.'

Under the shelter, then, of the pilgrim habit rich men sometimes travel with the bands, hoping thereby to escape detection and save their purse. But they have a sharp class of men to deal with; men who are quite equal to any stratagem they may adopt; and they are quite equal to dealing with this one. One of their number, attired like a pilgrim, is sent out to meet the approaching parties of pilgrims four or five days' journey from the city. Resting by the wayside, he awaits their approach, joins himself to them, ingratiates himself into their favour, tells them all about himself, where he comes from, what estates he has, what his revenues are, and how he is about to cheat the Brahmins. Of course the whole of it is false; but it answers its purpose. They become equally talkative, and convey a great deal of valuable information about themselves; all of which he makes a mental note of, till, getting an opportunity, he commits it to paper and sends it off by post to his friends. On receipt of the letter they take action. If there is a Rajah among them, they get up a procession and go out to meet him. Coming up with the party, which they easily recognise by the presence of their colleague, they are led by signs to the Rajah, and hail him by name. He expresses surprise they should know him, or that they should be aware even of his coming, and asks by what means they have learned his secret. 'From the gods,' cry the lying priests, 'from the gods! They tell us everything. They told us you were coming, and that, since you were bringing an offering to them of such magnitude, we, their servants, should go out to meet you, and lead you

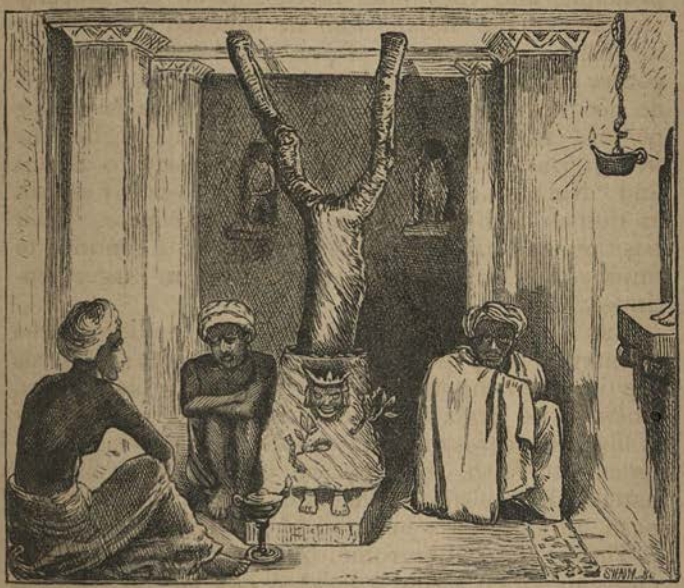
into their presence with the honour befitting your rank and merit.' In this way the poor dupes are led into extravagances which often impoverish them and put them in the power of the money-lenders, who are like the Dutchman who never charged more than one per cent. When questioned as to the sum, he said, 'I lend a man a shilling for a day, and I charge him one shilling for its use. He pays me two shillings. That is what I mean by one per cent.' The money-lenders of India manage business on much the same principle, and they hold mortgages on the property of many of the Rajahs who are believed to be rolling in wealth; as a matter of fact the latter are getting poorer and poorer every year. But while I say this, I do not wish it to be supposed that India is getting poorer. It is getting increasingly wealthy; but the wealth, instead of belonging as formerly to Rajahs and 'Nabobs,' is more diffused. The wealthy are not as rich as formerly; the poor are not so poor. Their position has greatly improved, and will continue to improve as long as the present rise in wages continues.

But I must not allow the economic condition of the country to lead me away from the subject. Pilgrims are imposed upon, not in one but in many ways. There is no limit to human credulity; and credulity is always greatest among peoples who give sight preference to faith, the physical to the spiritual. The barefaced impositions that annoy or amuse the European, are implicitly believed by the Hindu.

There is an underground temple in one of the large cities, in which a tree is pointed out by the priests as one of the wonders of the universe. It is said to be *thousands* of years old, and to have lived in the dark all the time; in evidence of which they point to a twig, the point of union of which with the stump is carefully hidden by a coloured cloth, which is, of course, placed there out of veneration for the wonderful life and to protect it from danger! The European

can see through the trick easily; the Hindu never imagines that the twig is changed frequently and that it is well supplied by moisture from some hidden vessel. Thousands crowd to see it. I have seen the underground passages crowded to suffocation with eager devotees, who so thoroughly believed the attendant priests that it was impossible to undeceive them.

When the Hindus come into contact with an aboriginal tribe, which they are constantly doing



THE SACRED TREE IN THE UNDERGROUND TEMPLE.

from national expansion, due to an alarming increase of population, efforts are made to incorporate them with the larger community. The mode of operations is simple in the extreme. A mendicant takes his place by the roadside, in a jungle or a village, and

after attracting general attention, declares the oneness of the tribal religion with Hinduism. Flattered by the attention, the tribe is prepared to believe anything, and the mendicant generally proves the identity of their gods with those of the Hindu pantheon by a miracle! On a day, previously arranged, as many as can attend are invited to see the god rise from the earth to claim his own. But the night before the miracle the mendicant places a large dish of peas in the ground, and on the top he places the idol. When the people begin to arrive, he makes selection of the prepared place as the spot where the god will appear. To help him on his journey, he refreshes the ground plentifully with water; the peas swell, and in swelling force the idol upwards, much to the astonishment of the witnesses of the prodigy, who instantly give in their adhesion to the Hindu faith, and become one of the low castes of the community! Hinduism believes that all religions are equally good, and that the names of the tribal gods are but appellations of the gods they worship. They go so far as to assert that Christ and Krishna are one and the same; though, if living now, Krishna would never be out of gaol. He was a warrior and a libertine. His chief deeds, those by which he is principally remembered, are distinctly immoral; and yet they dare assert his identity with the Christ. The Brahmin claims superiority to the gods; mendicants, by means of austerities, surpass them in holiness, and deprive them of power; the consequence is that they lay claim to the most extravagant ability to do what we can only call the supernatural. The people believe and fear. We put them to the test, and by proving their powerlessness weaken their authority.

I was walking in the garden one morning when a fakir entered and asked me if I would give him a few flowers. 'Certainly,' I said, never dreaming to what use he was to put them, and I never thought of asking. I thought he wanted them for the

same reason as I myself would ask for a flower—because of their beauty and fragrance. On the following morning he called again, and made a similar request.

'Are those withered?' I asked.

'Oh, yes; I offered them to the god,' he replied.

When I heard his explanation, I said, 'You cannot have any more; I cannot give you flowers as an offering to an idol.'

He seemed surprised, and began to threaten.

'You will not give me flowers! Very well, I shall curse your garden. I shall curse every plant. They will all die, and your garden will become a jungle.'

'Oh,' I said, 'you had better be off if you are to use threats! They are of no avail. They do not frighten me, for I am not a Hindu, and certainly will not consent to take abuse. Be off!'

Away he went; but as he left he cursed the ground, he cursed the trees, he cursed me and mine. The natives who heard him looked very frightened. They expected it would all take place.

It happened that on this particular morning there were quite a number of buds ready to burst, and on the following morning the garden was like a sea of glory. The bushes were covered with flowers. The natives smiled, shrugged their shoulders, and, let us hope, lost faith in fakirs' curses.

The natives fear to put them to the test; for the fakir claims the power and asserts it so constantly, that I have not the least doubt he believes he possesses it.

A friend, who had lived some years in equatorial Africa, told me that the medicine-men make the same claim. On one occasion a medicine-man, in his presence, drew a line, and told the natives they could not pass over it. They believed him, and never ventured to test his power. He himself had said it so often, that he really believed he had the power. My

friend rose up, accepted the challenge, and, of course, crossed it without inconvenience. The medicine-man's reputation was gone, but my friend almost regretted he had broken the spell when he turned and looked at the poor fellow. So it is in India; no one dares try except the European, and the filthy, inhuman fakir continues to enforce his demands by the terror he inspires.

They try to frighten the European when his intentions menace their positions, and, if carried out, prove the falsity of their claims. When the engineers commenced the construction of the Dufferin Bridge at Benares, I am informed that the Brahmins foolishly tried to turn them aside from the enterprise by assuring them 'Mother Ganges' would never allow herself to be defiled by any such structure at a point on her bosom so holy. They soon found, however, they were dealing with men upon whom superstition had no hold. The work went forward, the piers rose above the water, when one day, without a moment's warning, one of them burst, the water rushed in, and several men were drowned. They were jubilant. 'You see you cannot desecrate Mother Ganges with impunity! The bridge will never go up. She will not allow it; and you had better stop before greater calamity overtakes you.'

The damage was soon repaired. The bridge is open, and now they say 'The virtue is gone from the Ganges and Benares.' The fact is, familiarity breeds contempt. It is too accessible to the pilgrim; for when he feels he can go at any time, the chances are he will not go at all. When their revenues were first threatened they protested; now they are seriously menaced, and to avoid the disgrace of final neglect and contempt, they smooth the way by prophecy. They assure the world that the railways and bridges have nothing to do with the religious decline; that the city's allotted time is spent; its day of glory ended!

Imposition is seen everywhere, but nowhere more

glaringly than in connection with religion. At a religious festival it is as open, as defiant, and as shameless as at an English fair. The quack and the charlatan are honest in their roguery compared with the host of impostors who line the roads in the vicinity of a religious gathering in India. It is so open, we can do no harm in looking on and criticising aloud.

Here is the man who lounges on a bed of spikes, smokes Indian hemp, and savours of sanctity. A holy man, truly! Well, he is to the Hindu; for in his coat of dust and ashes he is practising austerities which, in their estimation, will give him power with the gods, if they do not bring him merit exceeding even theirs. There is nothing kindly, nothing gentle about him. His features are coarse, not merely in cast, but expression, and reflect a mind coarse in texture, if not actually brutalised. Do not go too near his bed, lest you interfere with his sanctity. If you do, you will discover that he has a tongue more vile than his body, and a vocabulary that eclipses Billingsgate. Perhaps he has a reason more powerful than your uncleanness for objecting to your proximity. He does not like your critical eye, your sober, matter-of-fact investigation of his conduct. You do not come with a belief in him, and your unsympathetic nature is sure to handle him too severely. How can it be otherwise? Yes, he is on a bed of spikes, truly; but the points of contact are carefully protected by pads that are amply sufficient to save his skin and to prevent his suffering superfluous pains and aches. The whole thing is so skilfully arranged that, while he *appears* to suffer unimaginable torture, he is really indulging a lazy, indolent nature.

Here, again, is the man who never lies down—when people are looking on! He does not pretend to be able to keep up without support. His deceit is not in that; but in the assertion that night and day, week, month, year, he keeps on his feet. He is well

supported by day. A stout pole is driven into the ground, and from this a flat board is suspended by means of strong ropes. These are passed under his arms, so that his chest rests on the board, and in this way he is able to keep on his feet—while daylight favours observation. Darkness is kindly and favours rest.

THE MAN WHO NEVER LIES DOWN.

Here is an interesting group—a middle-aged couple with two handsome daughters. They have a piteous tale to tell: one that touches the emotional side of human nature, and makes the onlooker seek out the spare coins he—or rather *she* may have in her pocket; for men are hard, and actually resist the pathetic appeal as they pass smilingly onward. Let us listen to the story. 'I am a poor Brahmin,' says the man; 'this is my wife, and these two lovely girls are our daughters. They are beautiful enough to excite love; but, alas! men in this Age of Darkness are consumed with avarice. Beauty alone is insufficient; they demand it should be richly dowered. I am too poor

to pay what they demand; and if I cannot raise the amount, they must remain unmarried, to our eternal disgrace. Oh! help us in our trouble, and merit the everlasting favour of the gods.' It is evident the story is irresistible. The proof is so tangible that the unfortunate damsels have scarcely time to look up, so busy are they gathering the money into a heap.

Here is a repulsive reptile! Don't be afraid; it is not a snake nor a crocodile, but a man. Nor need you be afraid of contagion, though he appears to be writhing under the agonies of cholera. It is mere simulation. There he will lie and simulate the disease for days to come, if there is a continued prospect of monetary sympathy. His son lies over him, crying 'Father! father! My father is dying!' *Women* stop to listen, to 'eat deception,' and to part with their money to a worthless fellow whose proper place is the inside of a prison.

Passing these, we reach a place occupied exclusively by mendicants and fakirs. I do not mean to imply that what *they* do is deception: juxtaposition is entirely accidental. Much they exhibit has cost suffering and endurance far beyond our powers of conception; but the pain is long since past and gone, and now the deformities of person have become a means of livelihood.

Here is a sort of crib, and in it something that bears a far distant resemblance to humanity. It is a ball, with undeveloped legs and arms appended, but they are neither useful nor ornamental. It is placed there evidently to excite compassion and secure alms. It cannot speak; it cannot turn round; but if you throw a pice on the heap of coins already collected, it will thank you by revolving the arms two or three times, with as great a display of intelligence as the automatic collecting boxes at railway-stations that say 'Thank you' when you drop in a coin. Poor wretch! Death would be preferable to life in such a body; but those who own it, and reap a harvest so

plentiful from its possession, take such care of it, that death is likely to be a far distant visitation.

Here are two fakirs who are certainly companions in misery and helplessness. They are men who, in fulfilment of a vow, have kept their arms up until they have become so fixed and rigid that it is impossible to take them down again. In one case both the arms are fixed, and the finger nails have grown so long that they have forced their way through the palm of the hand, and coil themselves about like snakes.

THE FAKIRS WHO CANNOT TAKE THEIR ARMS DOWN.

In the other case only one arm has been sacrificed. The pain must have been excessive till the limb became fixed: now there is none. The arm is shrunken and attenuated till it looks as if it had been taken from a mummy. Still there is life in it, and if it could be brought back to its proper position it might regain its former roundness and strength, but the pain of attempting this would be so great, that even fanatics like these may well be pardoned their resolution to allow them to remain as they are. Besides

which, rigid arms are valuable possessions, judging by the piles of money that lie beside them, the offerings of visitors who admire their fortitude, pity their helplessness, and hope to share their merit.

Their popularity is shared by an object that excites our disgust, though it calls forth the admiration and the offerings of the Hindu. In a railed-off portion of the grounds, about 14 × 14 feet, there is an old gray-haired man, sitting in dust and ashes. His skin ought to be a light chocolate colour; now it is a dirty gray; for dirt and sanctity have a curious fashion of pairing in the East. But he is holy, *very* holy; so holy, indeed, that the very ashes he sits upon have become holy, and the people are all eagerness to secure a pinch of it from his sacred hand, that they may share his blessedness. None so poor but he can afford to make an offering to swell the growing heap: none so mean as to take the pinch of wood ash, and its sanctity, without a tangible return. How far will human credulity go? And yet we are told the natives of India are poor! I do not know how much they have to eat and live upon; but I know from observation, they have a great deal to pour into the lap of imposture, much for religion, and an overflowing abundance for social occasions like weddings. At these religious fairs the most noticeable things are superstition, avarice and vice. There they are concentrated and make an imposing demonstration; but they are only the enlarged expression of what is transpiring less openly day by day in city and mart. There is no private and, consequently, no public conscience. I give two more illustrations, and then I shall take my leave of this phase of Hindu character.

A tea planter was obliged to bring an action against a neighbouring Hindu planter for intercepting and diverting a watercourse that watered his garden, and upon which the fertility of his bushes depended. His claim was just and good, and only required to be shown to secure a decision in his favour.

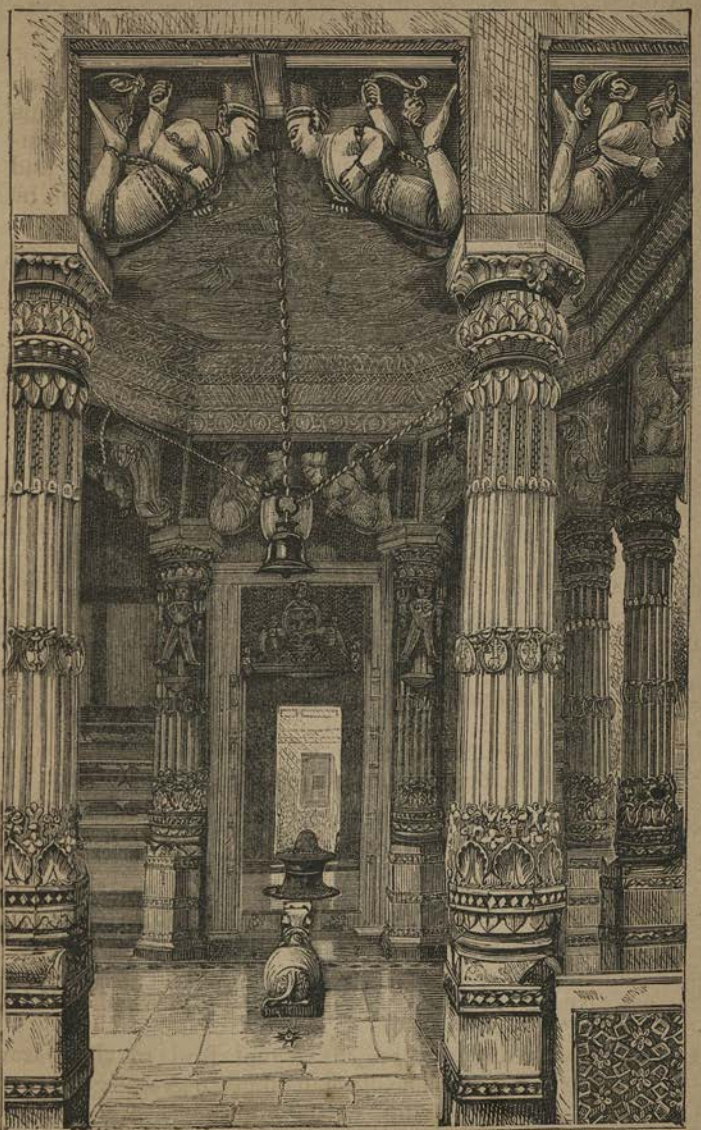
Among others he summoned as a witness, a baboo who served him in the capacity of clerk. This man was put in the witness-box, sworn, and commenced his evidence. The first part was true and relevant: the latter half, entirely false. When he left the court his master asked him why he told so many lies when his case was so good. 'Oh,' replied the baboo, 'why run the risk of losing a good case for the sake of a few lies?' He was like the Scotch tradesman who was summoned to give evidence in a case of theft. When he had said all he had to say, he appeared fearful lest the culprit should be let off too leniently. To prevent this he continued: 'My lord, this is nothing to some of his tricks. Not very long ago he came at night and stole the signboard from above my door; and in the morning he came and offered to sell it to me, remarking that he thought it might be of more use to me than anybody else.'

On one occasion I was asked to attend a patient suffering from fever. I did so till he was quite restored to health. Some months afterwards he called upon me and told me he had received a summons from the magistrate of a neighbouring town. 'I have come,' he said, 'to ask you to give me a certificate that you are attending me for fever, and that I am so ill it would be dangerous for me to travel at present.' I stared at him in blank amazement. 'Why,' I replied, 'it is months since you were ill. You are as strong and well as I am, and quite fit to attend the court.' 'I know I am,' was his unabashed rejoinder; 'but then, as I am defendant in this action, I want to get out of it, and if you will be kind enough to favour me with a certificate my presence will be excused.'

'No,' I replied, 'I cannot comply with your request.'

Several days afterwards I met him in the bazaar and asked him when he had to go to A——gurh.

'I am not going,' he replied; 'I went to Dr. G—— (naming a native doctor, in the Government



INTERIOR OF A HINDU TEMPLE.

service) and asked him to treat me for fever. I went twice and paid him six rupees for attendance and medicine. Then I asked him for a certificate and he gave it to me for five rupees more.' Comment is needless!

The word *temple* is somewhat misleading when applied, as it generally is, to every kind of building used by the Hindus for worship. Some of them are large and stately; the major portion are mere shrines, and would be unworthy of mention but for the amount of decorative art usually expended upon them. In many instances the carving is most elaborate and chaste. To withhold admiration would be churlish; even though some of the figures almost approach in scantiness of apparel the statuary in many of our art galleries.

Where our disgust is excited is in seeing the uses to which they are put. Imagine one of these beautifully-carved buildings inhabited by a lot of filthy monkeys. The image takes quite a subordinate place. The priests appear to expend their time and attention in fostering the mischievous community. In some places they have increased to such an extent, that they have become a nuisance to the people. In cities where they abound, iron bars have been put across the windows; and in many instances the open roofs of the courtyards have been covered over with bamboo trellis-work to keep them out. Still, so great is the annoyance to the people, that, though they dare not interfere with them themselves, they would gladly support any action the English authorities might take to get rid of them, short of killing.

The monkey is a sacred animal; I ought, to be strictly accurate, to say a god; that collectively they are the incarnations of gods, and therefore worthy of devout regard. This statement must seem like a 'traveller's tale'; I shall, therefore, for the sake of those who are not acquainted with Hindu mythology, abridge their story from the *Rāmāyan*, the sacred

epic which gives an account of Rām:—one, it will be remembered, of the incarnations of Vishnu.

Rāvan, King of Lankā (Ceylon), a demon, was the disturber of the peace of the universe and 'the enemy of heaven.' 'Shameless, pitiless, and ever bent on mischief, the ten-headed miscreant thought to conquer Rāma; whenever he found a stray Brāhmin

SACRED MONKEYS.

he frightened him into payment of ransom,' and even began to exact tribute from the monks. 'The sun and moon; the wind; Varuna and Kuver, fire, time, and death, and every divine power; Kinnars, saints, men, gods, and serpents all were turned out of their course. From one end of earth to the other, every living creature, whether male or female, was made subject to Rāvan. All, in turn, do his

bidding, and crouch suppliantly at his feet . . . By his mighty arm he subdued the whole universe, and left not a single soul independent, but, acting on his own counsel, exercised dominion over the whole round world . . . Whatever he told Indrajit to do was done in less time than it took to tell; hear now how the other chiefs acted, to whom he gave orders. The whole demon crew, villainous at heart and foul of aspect, the torment of heaven, were ready for any outrage, disguising themselves by the assumption of various forms, and acting in every way contrary to the Veda, in order to eradicate religion. Wherever they find a cow or a Brāhmin, they at once set fire to the city, town, or village; pious observances are no longer anywhere in existence; no respect is paid either to Scripture, or Brāhmin, or spiritual instructor; there is no faith in *Hari*, no sacrifice, no prayer, nor almsgiving, and no one would ever dream of listening either to Veda or Puràna.'

'At a hint of prayer, or of penance, of sacrifice, vigil or fast,
Not a moment's rest, but he hied on its quest, with a vow it should be the last.
The world was sunk in lawlessness; all holy sounds were banned;
To read a sacred text was death or exile from the land.'

'The wicked all throve; such as demons and gamblers, and those who coveted their neighbour's wife or goods, those who honoured neither father nor mother nor the gods, and those who exacted service from better men than themselves. For people who act in this way Bhavāni resemble demons. Seeing the general persecution of religion, Earth was terror-stricken and dismayed; "the weight of mountains, lakes, and seas is nothing so heavy as this one tyrant." She saw all faith perverted, and yet for fear of Rāvan could say nothing. After some consideration she took the form of a cow and went to the spot where the gods and saints were gathered together, and with tears declared to them her distress. There was no help to be had from any one of them.'

In their conscious helplessness they went to Brahma, who encouraged them to remember *Hari*,* 'who will put an end to this cruel oppression.' 'Glad at heart and thrilled with delight,' he began to chant his praises:

'To the King of heaven be all glory given, refuge of creation in distress and care,
Priests and kine befriending. Hell's brief triumph ending. . ...
Life's alarms dispelling, all disasters quelling, comfort of the faithful, be our succour now;
All the gods implore thee, falling low before thee, with unfeigned submission of body, soul, and vow.'

'Beholding the alarm of the gods and earth, and hearing this devout speech, a dread voice came from heaven that removed all their doubt and anxiety.' The Lord promised to become incarnate, and 'remove the whole of Earth's burden.' 'On hearing the heavenly voice in the air the gods turned and were consoled, and Brahma exhorted Mother Earth to forget her fears in hopefulness.'

Then Brahma proceeded to his own realm after thus instructing the gods: 'Go and worship *Hari* upon earth in form of monkeys.'

The gods went every one to his abode, and, with Earth, had rest. All the orders that Brahma had given, they executed gladly and without delay. Taking birth on earth as monkeys of incomparable strength and dignity, warriors with rocks and trees and claws for weapons, they confidently awaited Hari's coming, swarming in every mountain and forest, and divided among themselves into orderly troops.'†

Of these Bali was king, but Hari, in his incarnation as Rām, sent him to heaven for his cruelties to his brother. Hanuman — Son of the Wind — the monkey god or chief, acted as leader, ally, and spy to Rām in his march against Rāvan.

* An epithet of Vishnu, the second manifestation of Brahm, of which Ram is an incarnation. Here used of Ram.

† Growse's translation of the *Rāmāyan* of Tulsi Das.

Hence the sacredness of the monkey, and the reason they are allowed to live in the temples.

In Muttra they swarm everywhere about the city, and along the roads outside the cantonments. These they never enter, though they will come as far as the culvert and sit on the parapet. The fact is, the soldiers may catch or kill them if they cross that boundary line; they appear to know it, and always keep to the safe side.

It is dangerous to touch them in the city. On one occasion two officers were going through the city when the monkeys ran after them as if they intended to attack. They wounded one, and in wounding it raised the priests and pilgrims against them. They endeavoured to get away; but without success. The fanatics seized them, threw them into the river, and drowned them before aid could arrive.

Near the place where the tragedy happened, I once witnessed a sight I shall not readily forget—a fight between a large male monkey and a portly Brahmin! It was about the possession of a brass goblet. The Brahmin had set it down with something in it, and as soon as he turned his back, the monkey came down, put his hand in, grasped part of the contents, and, of course, could not get his fist out. The Brahmin returned, and at first tried endearing expressions to get it to give up the vessel; but to no purpose. Then he tried something a little stronger, and emphasized it with the exhibition of a loaded bamboo. To this the monkey replied by threatening him with its teeth and armed fist. As I passed the Brahmin stood with his stick at the 'present;' the monkey with the brass goblet high over head as if it would pitch it the instant he dared move. Yet the Brahmin, who could be abusive to men, who could rob the poor pilgrims of their all, would not venture to touch the hateful brute.

We had a school in this town some years ago, at a place near which the monkeys used to congregate in

very large numbers. One morning I was examining the pupils, but found it difficult to keep their attention. Something appeared to be amusing them. It was evidently over my head, but as I had kept my sun hat on to protect me from the heat, I could not see what it was. Their amusement went on increasing, till I could no longer resist the temptation to follow the direction of their gaze. Looking up, I saw a monkey stretched out on the trellis roof like a man over a grating, its arm stretched out to the full, in a frantic effort to seize my hat! When I looked up and stopped the fun, it grinned and chattered at me as if I had been its greatest enemy.

Cows, bulls and monkeys, however, do not exhaust the list of the lower creation that receive the homage of the Hindus. Snakes, too, are favoured in this respect, notwithstanding the Indian Government is prepared to pay a small sum for every venomous reptile they kill. They are sacred, I imagine, because Vishnu reclines on the Great Mundane Serpent, worshipped because the people fear them, and think that by timely sufferings they may appease their anger and avert unpleasant consequences. Notwithstanding they are said to kill something like 20,000 victims every year.

Whatever may be the true cause of veneration, there can be no doubt they hold a high place in Hindu regard, and are the subject of not a few of their stories and fables, some of which I proceed to relate.

Caste, whatever justification it may have in Hindu society, might be expected to stop short among a people who have reduced social distinctions to a science. But it will be seen from the following story that this is not the case:

A large, fierce cobra took up its abode in a field, and proceeded forthwith to clear out all other occupants. The first to fall victims to its venom were the poor cattle. One after another it bit them

till the herd was destroyed. The rainy season came round, and the ploughman drove in his team to turn up the soft, moist soil. He had hardly begun his labours when, hissing and furious, the reptile stole upon him, bit his heel, and then attacked the bullocks; but, alarmed by the fate of their driver, they hurried home, the plough trailing behind them. The community, startled by the unusual return of the animals, set out in search of the ploughman. On arrival at the field they found his dead body; but while they were lifting and arranging it for burial, the snake attacked the party. Frightened by its size and fierceness, they beat a hurried retreat, carrying the body with them. A meeting of the villagers was called, at which it was decided that a field occupied by a serpent so dangerous should be left untilled. This was done for several years; but, as they had to pay rent for it, they at last determined to put it under cultivation once more. But who was to do it? While still pondering the problem, a stranger entered the village and asked what troubled them. They told him the story, and solicited his advice.

'If,' he replied, 'you are unable to find anyone among yourselves to undertake the duty, supply me with a team and plough, and I will till the land for you.'

They hailed his offer with delight. The bullocks and plough were delivered to him, and away he went for the field. He had hardly begun his work when the snake, furious at the renewed invasion of its domains, hurried out, its eyes glaring, and its tongue darting out and in like the movement of an electric needle. On it came, but the new ploughman did not hurry; indeed, he seemed to court the attack. At length it reached him; raised its head to bite; lowered it again without striking, and with a look of disdain exclaimed: 'Disgusting! The fellow has already been bitten by all the low caste snakes and now he actually expects that a high caste serpent like myself

should condescend to do the same!' The man was allowed to till the soil in peace, and the land proved more than ordinarily fertile for its prolonged rest.

The following must be the Indian version of the goose that laid the golden eggs, with, of course, local variations and colouring.

A snake, driven out of its hole by the inrush of water, sought refuge in a stately dwelling. After prowling about for some time without attracting notice, it found a hole in the wall, and took possession. When its presence was discovered, the owner thought the wisest policy would be to make it his friend. This resolve once taken, he proceeded to carry it out by placing a dish of milk at the mouth of the hole for his self-invited guest. It hurried out and commenced to partake of his hospitality. When it had finished the milk, it repaid his kindness by presenting him with thirty-two rupees. The friendship was mutual; every day the man brought the dish of milk, and the snake gave him thirty-two rupees. One day, being busy, he asked his son to feed the snake. The youth put down the dish: the reptile came out and began his repast. While he was drinking the boy began to think. 'What,' he reasoned, 'is the use of feeding this wretched creature every day? Why wait while he doles out the money so slowly? One blow, and I can possess myself of his mine of wealth.'

He had, unfortunately for himself, a cane in his hand at the moment, and, obeying the impulse, struck at the cobra. The blow failed; but the snake, irritated by the attack, raised its head and bit him. When the man came back he found the corpse of his son lying by the hole and the supply of milk only half consumed. He guessed the circumstances at once; but instead of trying to drive out the intruder, he brought the offering of milk on the following day as usual. The snake came to the opening, but refused to come out. The man pled with it not to refuse his

hospitality. 'Do take it,' he urged; 'do not disgrace me by a refusal.' 'No,' said the serpent, 'I shall not take it till you have healed my back and raised your son to life!'

And now I come to another story, from which I find people draw very different morals. Under the circumstances I leave it an open question, and content myself with merely relating the fable.

In the depth of the Indian winter, a Hindu on a journey, was passing through a forest; he was very cold, and seeing numerous twigs lying about, gathered up a bundle and lit a fire. Indian fashion, he sat down, brought his knees up on a level with his chin, put his arms over them, and spread out his hands. Just when beginning to feel the warmth, he thought he saw one of the lower twigs move. Looking more intently he saw it was a cobra, which, being stiff with the cold, he had mistaken for a twig and taken to help the fire. The snake, thoroughly alive now, cried out: 'Please take me out of the fire; I am burned all over.' The traveller took it out and put it down on the road.

'Oh!' said the snake, 'I am in agony; would you do me the favour of taking me down to the river and cooling me?'

'With pleasure,' said the man; 'I shall do everything in my power to oblige you.'

With that he took it down to the river, dipped it in the water, and when he had thoroughly cooled it, laid it upon the bank.

Immediately the cobra raised its head, spread out its hood, and with its eyes glaring, said: 'Now I am going to bite you.'

'Bite me!' cried the man—'bite me! Why, I have only just saved your life, and now you say you are going to bite me. Do you call that a fitting return for my kindness?'

'Aha,' said the snake, 'I am only following the custom of the world! Do you not know that the world always returns evil for good?'

'No, no; that is not true!' cried the man.

'Oh! but if you disbelieve me,' said the snake, 'I can prove the truth of my statement.'

'Very well,' said the traveller; 'prove it.'

With that they set off along the dry dusty road. They had not gone very far when they met a man coming along, leading an old cow by a halter. The cow was very old and very weak—so weak that its legs were bending under it and its knees rubbing each other. Its hide was almost hairless, and every bone could be traced through it. Altogether it was a pitiable object.

'Ask this cow,' said the snake.

'O cow, will you be good enough to tell me whether you have found this snake's statement true? He says the world always returns evil for good. Is that so?'

'Ah, yes! Alas, it is only too true.'

'Come, come; I really do not understand you; explain yourself,' cried the man. 'How can you possibly say such a thing!'

'Say such a thing!' exclaimed the cow in anger—'say such a thing! Why, because I know how true it is. Once I was a young cow: now I am old. I have had quite a number of calves in my time. They are grown up, ploughing the land, carrying water, and drawing carts; indeed they are the humble slaves of men. In my time I have given a great deal of milk. With it men have fed their children, and made butter and ghee. Now I am a poor old cow, and can give no more, they forget my past services, refuse to give me anything to eat, and have sold me to this butcher, who is taking me away to kill me. Is not that returning evil for good?'

'Well, well, well!' cried the man, 'this is extraordinary. I never thought of all this before. But surely this is an exceptional case—not the rule of the world. Come, I am not convinced yet; more proof, if you please.'

'Very well; as you will,' said the snake, and moved forward.

They had not gone very far when they heard the ring of the woodman's axe. Guided by the sound, they came to the stump of an old tree which the wood-cutter was busy cutting.

'Ask this tree,' said the snake. Approaching, the man said: 'O tree, is it true that the world always returns evil for good?'

'Yes, alas! as I know to my sorrow,' replied the decaying stump.

'But how is that? Please explain.'

'Ah,' said the tree, 'I was once young and vigorous. I shot my head up into the heavens, and kept it erect when the tempest bent, rocked, and swayed my neighbours. I stretched out my brawny arms on either side and covered them with a graceful foliage. By day I cast a dense shade, under which the weary pilgrim rested, and in the dry season, when the husbandmen could not get grass for their cattle, I threw out fresh, succulent leaves, with which they kept them alive. Now I am old, my head has fallen off, my limbs droop and decay; and this man is cutting me down to make firewood of me. Is not that returning evil for good?'

'Alas, alas!' cried the man. 'I never thought this was the case. But, if you please, one favour, O snake; I have a wife and family. Give me permission to go and take farewell of them.'

'Certainly,' said the snake. 'Be quick, I shall stay here till you come back.'

Away went the man. When he reached home he related his adventure to his wife, who inquired:

'What do you propose doing? Do you intend returning?'

'I hardly know,' said the husband.

'Oh, but you must!' was the reply; 'and I shall accompany you with the children.'

When all arrangements were completed, they set

out, and found the serpent ready waiting them. As he saw them coming along, his teeth watered in anticipation, and he was all eagerness to strike his fangs into his victim, when the wife interposed:

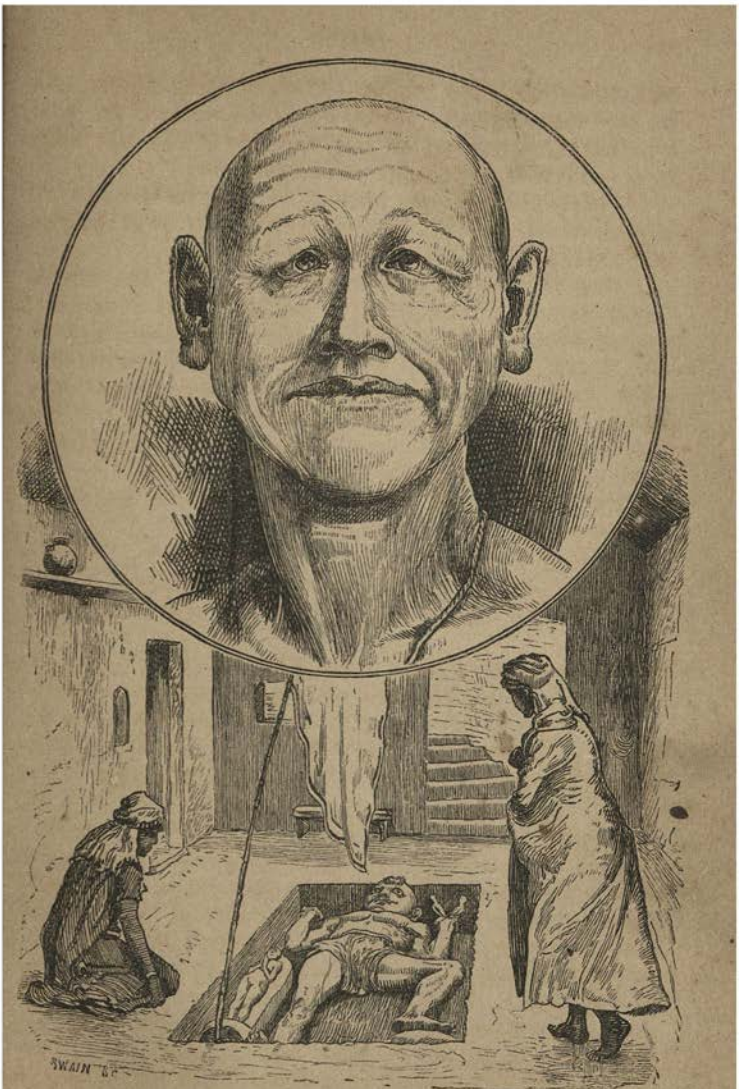
'One moment, if you please. When you have bitten my husband, and he has succumbed to your poison, what shall I do with all these children?'

'This is somewhat embarrassing,' said the snake. 'You were not here when I said I would bite him; and of course I never thought of you nor the children. But I tell you what I will do. I have been about a good deal, and in my travels have come upon a very destructive powder; it is so powerful, that if you but put a very little of it on your greatest enemy, he will shrivel up, and crumble into dust.'

'Excellent!' cried the woman. 'Give me some before you bite my husband.'

The unsuspecting snake gave the powder. As soon as she received it, she cast it on the reptile, and reduced it to dust, thereby returning evil for good to the end.

A great many have wished they had this powder. It would be an inestimable blessing to residents in the tropics; for it is perfectly safe to say there is no antidote known for snake bite. A friend of mine would have been very glad to have possessed it when placed in the following very trying position: He had gone on a visit to a family living in a country district. The way was long, the heat intense, so that before he reached his destination he was ready for the luxury of a bath. On arrival, he hurried into his room, undressed, and plunged into the tub. After immersing his head once or twice, he sat up and brushed the water from his face, when, to his horror, he discovered a huge cobra in the doorway. What was he to do? How was he to get out? At first he tried the effect of water. That, however, was useless. He was getting chilled; yet it would not move, except to follow his actions with its eyes. At



A HINDU HOLY MAN AND IMAGE OF GOD.

last he got out, rubbed himself with the towel, tied it about him, and went towards the snake. As he approached, the reptile hissed and darted forward; but missed its mark. Again he approached; again the snake darted at him, and again it missed him. He then began to think. He saw it did not move from the spot, only raise its head, and from its action could only strike the distance it raised itself. His resolution was soon taken. He advanced rapidly, and stopped; the cobra darted at him, and before it could right itself for a fresh attack, he sprang over it and fled!

Europeans run comparatively little danger from them, although one occasionally hears of a death. In the rainy season of 1880 I had the narrowest escape I have ever had. I was returning to Delhi, about 9 a.m. one day, along the Agra road, when I saw a bright, yellowish snake glide out from among the tombs and come on to the road. I apprehended no danger, and drove on, feeling confident it would get out of my way as I went forward. In this I was mistaken, for it stopped short in front of my horse. The poor brute was paralyzed with fright, and stood still. The snake was then by the footboard, and before I could take in the situation it sprang at me. I instinctively dropped the reins, and the horrible thing flashed past, striking me on the tips of the fingers and the knees as it passed. The spring carried it over the conveyance, but it turned and renewed the attack, and I could hear it distinctly beating against the bottom. The syce added to the horror and confusion by screaming, and for a time I could not tell whether it was in the well of the conveyance or outside. Fortunately the horse, feeling the reins loose, dashed off and broke the spell. When I drew him up and looked back, it was still on the road as defiant as ever. I had proved its springing capacity already, and without a moment's hesitation left it in possession of the field.

I found out subsequently that it was one of the most dangerous of the snake tribe, the bite of which meant death.

We were not greatly troubled with them in Benares. Our compound swarmed with the mungoose, which either drove them away or kept them down. On one occasion, during the hot season of 1883, one of these plucky little creatures gave battle to a cobra, seventy inches long, in the centre of our garden. The noise we made frightened them, and they went off, as fast as they could hurry, in opposite directions. A man, armed with a long bamboo, gave chase to the cobra, which was gliding off towards an old wall, and overtaking it, gave it a blow which broke the vertebræ and arrested its progress. Two or three more well-directed blows injured it so seriously that it lay as if dead. We gathered round it, amazed at its immense size, when someone remarked: 'Take care: the air may get into its lungs and revive it. If it does, it may spring suddenly and bite some of us: *bruise its head.*'*

Down went the bamboo again. Placing the end on its head, the man crushed it between the hard ground and his stick. The jawbone was broken, the muscles paralyzed, and the poison-glands destroyed. Notwithstanding, the snake coiled and twisted in the most lively fashion, but its power to work mischief was gone. Then I understood for the first time what the curse on the serpent meant: 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.'

When we remember all I have said about their religion, their morals, their gods, ascetics, and objects of worship, we may feel inclined to despise the Hindus. It will be well, perhaps, to give them our pity instead, that they should have been born under conditions that make belief in these puerilities possible; for, after all, with the great mass of mankind, beliefs are 'more instinctive than volitional,' and exercise a

* Genesis iii. 15.

terrible tyranny over the human mind. 'Hindus are crooked in their ways,' a gentleman once remarked to me, 'because their religion is crooked.' Given a pure religion, we have a fine, noble race. They are not without their good traits even now, but caste blights and kills all expression of regard beyond a very narrow circle. If not inventive, they are capital imitators, and are not without a wit as refined as anything we have in Europe. I close with a specimen:

Years ago, when the Moghul Emperors reigned in the imperial city of Delhi, a policeman was walking along one of the streets when he met a potter in mourning.

'O potter, for whom do you mourn?' he asked.

'Sadamiya,' was the reply.

'Dear, dear! is Sadamiya dead?' cried the policeman, and hurried off to the corner where the barbers sat plying their trade.

Sitting down before one of them, he said, 'Shave my head and beard;* I am going into mourning for Sadamiya.'

Shortly afterwards duty took the policeman to the Kotwali,† and as soon as he entered, the Kotwal asked him for whom he was mourning.

'For Sadamiya, that illustrious person.'

'Ah, dear! is he dead?' exclaimed the Kotwal. 'Well, well, all die in turn! Call the barber.'

The barber was called, and the Kotwal, too, went into mourning.

He had occasion to visit the Wazir,‡ who was surprised to see him in mourning; the more so as he did not know that any of his family were ill.

'Who is dead?' he inquired.

'Alas! your honour, that illustrious, high-minded, dignified Sadamiya has been called away.'

'Oh, dear me!' exclaimed the Wazir; 'I am sorry

* This is the way in which they go into mourning.
† Kotwali, office of chief of police. Kotwali, chief of police.
‡ Vizier.

to hear you say so. What a loss! Will you please call the barber?'

The barber came, and the Wazir, too, went into mourning. Duty took him into the presence of the Emperor, who was startled at his changed appearance.

'Who is dead?' he inquired.

'Your Highness, I grieve to inform you, but that sublime custodian of goodness, of honour, and learning, Sadamiya, has been taken.'

'Call the barber,' said the Emperor to his attendants, and in a very short time he, also in mourning, sought the presence of the Empress. When she saw him so changed, she asked, 'Who is dead?'

'Alas! that I should have to say it! Sadamiya is dead.'

'But who is Sadamiya?' she asked.

'Sadamiya! Sadamiya! Well, I never thought of asking, but the Wazir knows; I shall ask him.'

He went out and called the Wazir. When he came he asked, 'Who is this Sadamiya we are all in mourning for?'

'Really, your Highness, I never thought of asking; but the Kotwal knows; I shall ask him.'

The Kotwal was summoned.

'Who is this Sadamiya the whole State is in mourning for?' asked the Wazir on his arrival.

'Sadamiya! Sadamiya! Why, sir, I did not inquire; but the policeman knows; I shall ask him.'

The policeman was summoned; but he, too, was equally taken aback. He had never thought of asking; but the potter knew, and he set off to ask him for information.

When he reached the yard, the potter was busy at his wheel. He looked up in amazement when he saw the policeman come in; but this feeling gave place to horror when he saw he was in mourning.

'Who is this Sadamiya we are all in mourning for?' asked the policeman.

'You—you—do—not—mean—to—say—you—are—mourning—for Sadamiya?' he stammered.

'Yes, I am; and so is the Kotwal, and the Wazir, and the Emperor; indeed, the whole State has gone into mourning for him.'

'Oh dear! Whatever will become of me?' cried the potter. 'In mourning for Sadamiya? Why—Sadamiya is my—donkey!'

THE END.

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